

WHO IS THIS PERSON CALLED “GOD” AND WHAT DID HE SAY WHEN HE CAME INTO THE WORLD IN THE FIRST CENTURY?

As is the case with most of my studies, this study was written to inspire believers to grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ. Due to the fact there is so much confusion and erroneous thinking in the Christian world, I felt it was necessary to essentially address the most perplexing issues of the Christian life. When believers insist on rectifying divine truth with fallen human thinking, ultimately they will end up employing some untruth in their theology and let it be an integral part of their faith.

In order to understand what God has revealed to us in His Word, it is important that one have a contextual understanding of Divine Truth – without it, one can easily misinterpret what Scripture says. This has been the main problem for the believing world all the way back to the time of Moses – which essentially was about 3500 years ago.

Because this study is such an important one, I want to encourage every believer to give very careful consideration to all that is stated in this study. Though some of the issues that are addressed may be a little difficult to fully understand, take the time to read them carefully & reflect upon what is stated; it is only when we as believers humbly give careful consideration to what Scripture says, that God opens our hearts and minds and gives us the grace to understand His divine revelation. Remember, all of Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, reproof, correction, and righteousness, that God’s people may be adequately equipped to live for Him (cf. 2 Tim 3:16-17).

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As we begin this study, let me first draw your attention to the fact that I have *italicized*, underlined and **emboldened** numerous words, phrases and statements in this study, this was done to give greater emphasis to those words, phrases and sentences; thus accentuating what is stated, so read things accordingly. You'll also notice, I list a number of biblical references after certain statements that help give definition to what has just been stated; since this is a theological study regarding several aspects of who God really is, don't just make this study a casual read, but take the time to reflect upon the various passages that have also been listed. If you need to make it a week long or month long study, then by all means do so, but do study it; don't simply make it a casual read; the problem with most believers is that they don't study God's Word, instead they simply give casual reading to it (that was the problem in the ancient world, just like it is today – people simply make assumptions and let those rule in their hearts and minds. With the foregoing in mind, you might humbly begin your study each day with the words of the psalmists regarding God Himself: "Thou dost desire truth in the innermost being. Teach me Thy way, O Lord, that I might walk in the truth... Open my eyes, that I may behold wonderful things about Your nature and who You really are" (cf. Deut 4:29; 6:4-5; 10:12; Ps 51:6; 86:11; 119:18; Jer 29:10-14; 2 Pet 3:18). Now as we launch into this study let me provide a "Table of Contents" regarding the various issues and subjects that this study covers.

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PRELIMINARY ISSUE

Beloved, essentially it has now been almost 50 years since I committed my life to Christ and began serving in ministry. At the outset I had the privilege of managing a Jr. High Ministry, of which some of you were actually a part. After a couple of years of serving in that ministry, I then felt the need to be "seminary trained," because the foundation of my faith wasn't nearly as solid as I knew it needed to be. It was actually the words of James (the brother of Jesus) who motivated me to go to seminary; he said, "Let not many of you become teachers, because you will incur a stricter judgment" (Jam 3:1); obviously, that was a very sobering statement to me, and still is. The need to know precisely what

Scripture teaches became extremely important to me; to not properly interpret what God's divine revelation says was simply unacceptable to me. Though God had been at work in my life since I was a little child, and permitted me to experience some very painful negatives, I had constantly questioned things in life because of my fallen nature — in short, it was my lack of understanding some of the dynamic realities of the Christian life that was always perplexing to me, so being seminary trained was an absolute for me... it not only opened my eyes to the integrity of divine truth, it gave me the assurance of faith that was of absolute importance to me. It should be obvious to every believer, growing in faith is not a quick easy trip that happens in just a few years; essentially it is a life-long process; furthermore, it requires a humble heart, and a desire to know, understand and believe what Scripture teaches (cf. 1 Pet 2:2; 1 Cor 3:2; 14:20; Eph 4:11-24; Heb 12:1-11; 2 Pet 3:18). Now that I'm 77 years old, God is still exposing me to divine realities, and giving me the grace to share them with others; and this I have done now for 18 years by teaching in colleges and universities, writing and publishing, and having a website ministry (which gets 1500 to 1700 hits a day). Keep in mind, God has used some very painful trials and tribulations to build my faith (cf. Jn 16:33; Acts 14:22)... in so doing that has required a lot of humility, study and prayer. Again, divine knowledge isn't just a simplistic little precept that is easily understood; the truth is, life is a very sober reality that requires a lot of prayer, study and reflection (that should make sense to all of you as you read this study). My prayer is that you will find this study a great encouragement to your faith.

INTRODUCTION

As we approach this subject, it is important to remember that finite man cannot fully understand infinite God — the truth is, man is extremely limited in his ability to understand ultimate reality; he simply doesn't have the capacity to do so... to argue to the contrary is absolute foolishness; keep in mind, God Himself has declared that (we'll deal with that in detail later). As R. C. Sproul, one of the most respected preachers here in America during the 20th century, stated in his book, "Essential Truths of the Christian Faith" — "No human being has the ability to understand God exhaustively, because we are finite creatures and God is an infinite being." The Medieval theologians had a phrase that became a dominant axiom for all subsequent theological studies: "The finite cannot grasp the infinite;" the reality is, nothing is more obvious than this: "an infinite object cannot be squeezed into a finite space." As Sproul stated, "This axiom conveys one of the most important doctrines of orthodox Christianity — it is the doctrine of the incomprehensibility of God." What is important to remember is this: that does not mean that we can't know something about God; though our knowledge of God is partial & limited, according to God's revelation it is adequate for finite man — we can know God to the degree that He has chosen to reveal Himself. Remember the words of Moses to the Jewish world: "The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us" (Deut 29:29). One of the key reformers during the Protestant Reformation, Martin Luther, referred to two aspects of God — the hidden & revealed;

as such, *we are to walk in the light of what God has revealed*. Take the time to reflect upon the following passages (cf. Job 38-41; Ps 139; Is 55:8-9; Rom 11:33-36; 1 Cor 2:6-16),

Remember, God is a “**Triune God**,” and that doctrine is difficult and perplexing to us. What is important to remember is that the term “**Trinity**” describes a relationship not of three gods, but of **one God is three persons**. The word “**Trinity**” is used in an effort to define the fullness of the Godhead both in terms of His unity and diversity. The reality is, *God is one in essence and three in person*. Remember what we just stated in the previous paragraph, *finite man cannot fully comprehend the fullness of God* — though we know God is one, we cannot fully fathom or understand that He is three persons in one. Now though the “*term*” Trinity is not found in the Bible, *the concept is clearly stated*. Scripture clearly affirms the full deity of the three persons of the Godhead — *God the Father*, *God the Son*, and *God the Holy Spirit* — incidentally, all three persons of the Godhead possess all the attributes of deity. By the way, the work of Salvation was and is being accomplished by all three members of the Godhead — *the Father* initiates creation and redemption, *the Son* redeems the creation, and *the Holy Spirit* regenerates and sanctifies (applying redemption to believers). As previously mentioned, take the time to contemplate the following passages (cf. Deut 6:4; Mt 3:16-17; Mt 28:29; 2 Cor 13:14; 1 Pet 1:2).

Regarding “*the Self-existence of God*,” though Scripture declares that God is the Creator of the universe, it indicates that God Himself is not created; the truth is, it is impossible for something to create itself (such is a complete contradiction of terms — that which does not exist cannot do anything, because it does not exist; that should not be a difficult construct for anyone to believe). The truth is, *God is eternal* (i.e., He has always existed)... this is what makes God the *Supreme Being* and the *source* of all that exists — remember, unless something exists in and of itself, *nothing* could possibly exist at all... now since much exists, **GOD exists!** Once again, take the time to reflect upon the following passages (cf. Ps 90:2; Jn 1:1-5; Acts 17:22-31; Col 1:15-20; Rev 1:8). Again, because man is a *finite* creature, he cannot fully understand God who is *infinite*; thus God essentially is incomprehensible — look at it this way, since we are finite creatures we have severe limitations... the truth is, *we can only think an inch deep in comparison to God*, who thinks trillions upon trillions of miles deep — there is no limit to the depth of God’s thinking; it goes on and on ad infinitum), so to somehow think we have the ability to understand a significant amount of reality (including the eternity of God), is absolute foolishness — *that is just something we must humbly accept*; how can finite creatures not accept it? Again, though God is incomprehensible, that does not mean that we can’t know *something* about God; it simply means our knowledge is partial and limited; i.e., it is not fully comprehensible. The truth is, we can know God to the degree that He has chosen to reveal Himself... the reality is, there is vastly more divine reality than we can comprehend. What is interesting is listening to the Diabolical Left making claims that *God doesn’t exist*, yet here they are doing so with a brain that isn’t that much bigger than the animal world! They simply pride themselves because they actually think they are the smartest people in the world, and that they have the ability to prove that God doesn’t exist — the reality is, they are nothing but

arrogant moronic folks; stupid beyond stupid! Keep in mind, they make such deductions without a single piece of evidence! Nevertheless, they call everyone who believes in God stupid! Yet God Himself calls them unrighteous fools, and children of the devil (cf. Ps 10:4; 14:1; 53:1; Jn 3:19-20; 8:44; Rom 1:18ff; 3:10-12; Eph 5:6). Give careful consideration to what the following passage says regarding God's existence —

THE EVIDENCE THAT GOD EXISTS

Why do unbelievers constantly take God's name in vain? Because God exists and they hate God! Beloved, if God didn't exist, they would never take His name in vain! Why is that? Because no one hates something that does not exist!!! NO ONE! How stupid could one be to hate something that does not exist? Are you listening? The truth is, God has placed His divine presence in the world that the unbelieving world cannot remove! And one day God is going to hold them accountable for their diabolical actions!!! The reality is, Godless freaks despise everything God likes!!! Why is that? Because they are Anti-God!!! Conversely they love everything God hates!!! Why is that? Again, they are Anti-God!!! Beloved, if God doesn't exist, He wouldn't be rejected... He would not be a topic of conversation... and no one would define Him as the premiere reality in the universe!!! If God doesn't exist, He wouldn't even be an issue!!! How can one believe anything to the contrary? Incidentally, over 90% of the world believes in some kind of God, and about 10% have chosen to believe there is no God; the reality is, since God exists all people possess a God-consciousness — though the vast majority believe in Him at some level, some people have chosen not to believe in Him; and in so doing they simply reject Him!!! Though fallen man doesn't know how to fully identify God, they all believe “morality” is a God governing reality; the truth is, if a Moral God doesn't exist, then "sin" would be a none-issue, just like God would be! The amazing thing is, Christ died for man's sin that they might be redeemed & forgiven, that he might enter into God's eternal state! Yet some people hate God? How can they hate God who laid down His life for them? Here is the answer — SATAN is the one who convinced man to be his own God (thus he became a fallen creature). Though the vast majority of people believe in some kind of God, about 10% of the people in our fallen world are strongly outspoken against Him. Remember, Scripture refers to fallen men as "children of the devil!" (cf. Jn 8:44; 1 Jn 3:8), who will one day be cast into hell for hating Christ & loving sin; i.e., loving that which does not correspond with God's will (cf. Mt 25:31-46; 7:21-23; Rev 20:11-15). By the way, the foregoing argument simply gives a brief description that points to the fact that God exists. In the following passages I expand upon the evidence that God has a very strong presence in our world.

Now, because this is a very significant issue, I took the time to study what a number of highly esteemed Christian philosophers had to say... so let me identify them for you. First there was work of Norm Geisler, who trained numerous Christians in apologetics, evangelism, and discipleship. Dr. Geisler is known as the premiere apologist of the 20th century, and is the author of more than 100 books that are foundational to the Christian

faith; in them he makes a case for Christianity as the truth about God & people. By the way, Geisler was a professor for a number of years, and mentored numerous Christian leaders here in America. Then there is the American Christian apologist Frank Turek, who co-authored a book with Geisler titled, "I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist." Turek earned a Doctor of Ministry in Apologetics at Southern Evangelical Seminary, and down through the years he debated several prominent atheists including Christopher Hitchens and David Silverman (President of American Atheists); so Turek is widely featured as one of the world's leading apologetics... He appeared in hundreds of radio and television programs. And then there is the Christian author Lee Strobel, who was an atheist when he began investigating the biblical claims about Christ after his wife was converted; as a result of his studies he became a believer at the age of 29. Strobel is a best-selling author of more than twenty books — his classic, "The Case for Christ," is a perennial favorite which details his conversion to Christianity. Strobel also appeared in the feature film, "God's Not Dead," and was awarded a honorary doctoral degree by Southern Evangelical Seminary in recognition of his contributions to Christian apologetics. Over the years, Strobel has been interviewed on numerous national television programs, including ABC's 20/20, Fox News, & CNN. So much of what we will be discussing in the following paragraphs is the work of these three gentlemen. What is important is that you give very careful consideration to what is written, and not simply make it a casual read... by simply reading the following paragraphs without giving serious attention to what is stated, it is unlikely one will fully understand what is said, because there are numerous statements that you will need to fully contemplate.

The fact that God exists is the most important issue any person can consider. Ultimately what human experience, science, logic, and history leads people to believe is that God does exist... yet the question is often posed, "Can you prove God exists?" Outside of pure logic it is difficult to prove that God exists, because God is Spirit (*i.e.*, He is an invisible reality, not a physical reality), and that which is not physical is not fully understood by human beings. Remember, courtrooms don't require absolute proof, because such does not exist in our world; so courtrooms simply seek to "dispel reasonable doubt" and consider what is "most probable" — so when evidence strongly proceeds in a particular direction, a judgment is made and fully embraced. Since absolute proof and perfect knowledge transcends human thinking, there will always be a gap between what we can "know" and what we can "believe" — incidentally, this applies to both skeptics & believers, because we cannot possibly know every detail of anything... thus as Christians we live by faith; *i.e.*, we act, despite what we don't know, because of what we do know. That is the essence of biblical faith, including faith in the existence of God — we trust in what is known, despite a less than absolute understanding. Human life compels belief that truth, deception, love, hate, goodness, evil, etc., are real and meaningful... the vast majority of people down through the ages were inclined to believe a reality greater than the physical; because that which is physical is very limited in comparison with the totality of all reality. Therefore, according to the philosophical world, three of the more powerful logical suggestions that God exists are cosmological, teleological, and moral arguments.

1. **The cosmological argument** considers the principle of *cause and effect* – each effect is the result of some cause; thus logic demands *something eternally exists*, and since our universe is not eternal or uncaused, logic therefore points to God (the first cause of reality). Furthermore, *the Big Bang Theory* demonstrates the scientific validity of a *created, non-eternal universe*; therefore empirical data extends credibility to the idea of a biblical Creator, and contradicts an eternal universe.
2. **The teleological argument** examines the structure of the universe. The largest galactic scales, our solar system, our DNA, subatomic particles... everything gives appearance of having been *purposefully designed*. This trait is so strong that even hardened atheists are constantly fumbling to explain away the appearance of *design*. Furthermore, science has never observed or explained life arising from *non-life*; in addition to that, life also shows a sudden onset of *extremely complex organisms*.
3. **The moral argument** takes note of concepts like good and evil, right and wrong, ethics, and so forth. It is notable that these are discussions of “*what should be*,” not merely “*what is*.” The very idea that human beings think in non-physical, moral terms is striking... beyond that, *the fundamental content of human morals across cultures and history is identical*. So human beings do not support the conclusion that morals mean nothing. Conversely, the most reasonable explanation for why people think in moral terms and share moral ideals is a real moral law provided by a Moral Lawgiver (*i.e.*, God).

Now according to **Norm Geisler**, in recent times the diabolical left accused anyone daring to believe in God as being *delusional and irrational*. **Karl Marx** (a 19th century German atheist, philosopher and communist) asserted that anyone believing in God must have a mental disorder that causes invalid thinking. The psychiatrist **Sigmund Freud** (a popular 19th century Austrian professor, psychologist, atheist and medical doctor) wrote that a person who believed in a Creator God was delusional and only held those beliefs due to a “*wish-fulfillment*,” which Freud considered to be unjustifiable. Conversely, the new generation of atheists claim that a belief in God is intellectually unwarranted. So the question is, “*Is there a logical and reasonable argument outside of the Bible for the existence of God?*” So can a case for the existence of God be made that refutes the positions of atheists and give sufficient warrant for believing in a Creator? The answer is Yes. Moreover, in demonstrating the validity of an argument for the existence of God, *the case for atheism is shown to be intellectually weak*. The question that needs asking is this: “*Why do we possess something rather than nothing at all?*” This is the basic question of existence – *why are we here? why is the earth here? why is the universe here rather than nothing?* In considering this question, there are four possible answers as to why we have something rather than nothing at all –

1. Reality is not an illusion
2. Reality was created

3. Reality is not eternal
4. Reality was created by something that is self-existent

Reality being an illusion is what a number of *Eastern religions* believe... yet this option was ruled out centuries ago by the philosopher **Rene Descartes** who is famous for the statement, "I think, therefore I am." Descartes, a mathematician, argued that "if he is thinking, then he must be." In other words, "I think, therefore I am not an illusion." Obviously one cannot doubt the existence of himself without proving his non-existence. So the possibility of reality being an illusion is eliminated. Next is the option of reality being self-created – the possibility of reality being self-created means one must have existed prior to his creating himself, but that simply cannot be. Now in evolution this is sometimes referred to as something coming from nothing, which does not at all coincide with reality (because one cannot get something from nothing). Even the atheist **David Hume** said, "I never asserted that anything might arise without a cause." Since something cannot come from nothing, reality being self-created has been ruled out. So with the foregoing in mind, Geisler says we are left with two choices – an eternal reality or reality being created by something that is eternal. The 18th century theologian **Jonathan Edwards** summed up this crossroads:

- *Something exists.
- *Nothing cannot create something.
- *Therefore an eternal something exists.

You'll notice, we must go back to an eternal "something." The atheist who derides the believer who believes in an Eternal God, must turn around and embrace an eternal universe, because it is the only other option he can choose. Today, all key scientific and philosophical evidence points away from an eternal universe (because it exploded into existence 13.7 billions years ago), and points to an eternal Creator. Remember, from a scientific standpoint, honest scientists admit the universe had a beginning, and whatever has a beginning is not eternal. Now due to the fact the universe had a beginning, it is underscored by evidence such as the Second Law of Thermodynamics (remember, it is a "LAW"; i.e., absolute truth that is fully embraced by the scientific world. Conversely, The Big Bang Theory points to the fact that the universe is expanding and can be traced back to a singular beginning and **Albert Einstein's** theory of relativity; so all reality proves the universe is not eternal. Incidentally, the laws that surround causation speak against the universe being the ultimate cause of all we know, because an effect must resemble its cause. This being true, no atheist can explain how an impersonal, purposeless, meaningless, and amoral universe accidentally created human beings who are full of personality and obsessed with purpose, meaning, and morals. So in the end, the concept of an eternal universe is eliminated. Obviously, the foregoing requires a lot of thinking and reflection, so don't merely give it remedial attention. Beloved if you want to appreciate what it states, you must give very careful attention to it. With the foregoing in mind, the popular philosopher **J. S. Mill** (not a Christian) summed up where we have now come to – "It is self-evident that only Mind can create mind." The only rational and

reasonable conclusion is that an *eternal Creator* is the one who is responsible for reality as we know it. To put it in a logical set of statements, the reality is:

- *Something exists.
- *You do not get something from nothing.
- *Therefore a necessary and “eternal something” exists.
- *The only two options are an eternal universe and an eternal Creator.
- *Science and philosophy have disproven the concept of an eternal universe.
- *Therefore, an eternal Creator exists.

Former atheist Lee Strobel stated: “Essentially, I realized that to stay an atheist, I would have to believe that nothing produces everything; non-life produces life; randomness produces fine-tuning; chaos produces information; unconsciousness produces consciousness; and non-reason produces reason. Those leaps of faith were simply too big for me to take, especially in light of the affirmative case for God’s existence. In other words, in my assessment the Christian worldview accounted for the totality of the evidence much better than the atheistic worldview.” The next question we must tackle is one by Norm Geisler and Frank Turek — Since an *eternal Creator exists* (and we have shown that He does), what kind of Creator is He? Can we infer things about Him from what He created? In other words, can we understand the cause by its effects? The answer to this is, yes we can, with the following characteristics being surmised:

- *He must be supernatural in nature (as He created time and space).
- *He must be powerful (exceedingly).
- *He must be eternal (self-existent).
- *He must be omnipresent (He created space and is not limited by it).
- *He must be timeless and changeless (He created time).
- *He must be immaterial because He transcends space and physicality.
- *He must be personal (the impersonal cannot create personality).
- *He must be infinite and singular as you cannot have two infinites.
- *He must be diverse yet have unity as unity and diversity exist in nature.
- *He must be supremely intelligent; only a cognitive being can produce a cognitive being.
- *He must be purposeful as He deliberately created everything.
- *He must be moral (no moral law can be had without a giver).
- *He must be caring (or no moral laws would have been given).

These things being true, we now ask if any religion in the world describes such a Creator. The answer to this is yes — the God of the Bible fits this profile perfectly. He is supernatural (Gen 1:1), powerful (Jer 32:17), eternal (Ps 90:2), omnipresent (Ps 139:7), timeless/changeless (Mal 3:6), immaterial (Jn 4:24), personal (Gen 3:9), necessary (Col 1:17), infinite/singular (Jer 23:24; Deut 6:4), diverse yet with unity (Matt 28:19), intelligent (Ps 147: 4-5), purposeful (Jer 29:11), moral (Dan 9:14), and caring (1 Pet 5:6-7).

The last subject to address is this — How justifiable actually is the atheist's position? Well, since the atheist asserts that the believer's position is unsound, it is only reasonable to turn the question around and aim it squarely back at him. The first thing to understand is that the claim the atheist makes — that "*there is no god*" — is a completely untenable position to hold from a philosophical standpoint. As legal scholar and philosopher **Mortimer Adler** says, "*An affirmative existential proposition can be proved, but a negative existential proposition (i.e., one that denies the existence of something) cannot be proved.*" And that is why intellectually honest atheists admit *they cannot prove God does not exist*. The reality is, you can't say something doesn't exist when *you cannot prove it*... one can only say, "*We don't think it exists.*" Yet radical atheists say that certain things do not exist without any evidence whatsoever to prove their position. By the way, this is where a person sits when deciding between atheism and belief in God. The truth is, the atheist must prove his position, but he cannot. Instead, the atheist and those whom he convinces of his position will slide into eternity with their fingers crossed hoping that they do not find the unpleasant truth that eternity does exist. As Mortimer Adler says, "*More consequences for life and action follow from the affirmation or denial of God than from any other basic question.*" So, is there a rational, logical, and reasonable argument for the existence of God? Absolutely. It is the atheists who suffer from *wish-fulfillment*; i.e., the hope and wish that there is no God, no accountability, and therefore no judgment. But the God of the Bible affirms His existence and the fact that a judgment is indeed coming for those who know within themselves the truth that God does exist, but *he suppresses the truth* (cf. Rom 1:20). Always keep in mind, knowing that God exists is not simply the result of human logic — God has revealed Himself to all people; as the apostle Paul stated: "*That which is known about God is evident within man, for God made it evident to him... even though all men know God exists, many men do not honor Him as God.... the reality is, they exchange the truth of God for a lie*" — keep in mind those emboldened words are **emphatic** in Greek! (cf. Rom 1:19, 21, 25; also Rom 2:15; Ecc 3:11). Remember, "*As many as receive Christ, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God*" (cf. Jn 1:12-13).

WHAT GOD'S WORD TEACHES

As we launch into this subject, it is important to remember there is the *Old Testament* and the *New Testament*. Let's begin by defining what these two testaments teach — the Old Testament essentially teaches the history of the *Nation of Israel*, and God's dealing with them up to their returning from exile in Babylon. So the Old Testament focuses primarily on *God's relationship with the Jews*, starting with His call on *Abraham* in the 12th chapter of Genesis. God chose Israel and covenanted with them ultimately for the purpose of *relaying His message to the world*, and ultimately *bringing the Messiah into the world to save us from our sins*. Whereas the Old Testament records the giving of *God's Law*, the New Testament shows how Jesus the Messiah fulfilled the Law (cf. Matt

5:17; Heb 10:9); remember, the New Testament clarifies that the Law was meant to show men their “need” of salvation; it was never intended to be the “means” of salvation (Rom 3:19). Throughout the O.T. we see God’s judgment and wrath being poured out on sin; conversely, in the N.T. we see that the wrath of God is still being revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness who suppress the truth in unrighteousness (Rom 1:18); so God is really no different in the O.T. than the N.T., in spite of the fact that the O.T. gives greater emphasis to the God of wrath, and the N.T. to the God of love... so the O.T. gives greater focus to the wrath of God against sin... whereas the N.T. gives greater focus to the grace of God toward sinners. Again, the O.T. predicts a Messiah and the N.T. reveals the Messiah (cf. Is 53; Jn 4:25-26). So the O.T. essentially defined what was right and what was wrong — yet the Jewish world did not fully embrace it... instead of seeing themselves as sinful creatures... they saw themselves as good creatures who identified themselves as decedents of Abraham and Israelites (cf. Matt 3:9; Luke 3:8; John 8:33, 39, 53, Rom 9:7). Keep in mind, the Law was given that man would see himself for who he truly is (cf. Rom 3:20; 7:7). As the New Testament teaches, “by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified before God” (Gal 3:11). As Paul said, “Apart from the Law...one experiences the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ” (cf. Romans 3:21-24), “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God... as such, man is justified as a gift by God’s grace through the redemptive work of Christ. So man is justified by faith apart from the works of the Law” (cf. Rom 3:28; Gal 2:16). As Paul went on to say, “The Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ that we may be justified by faith” (Gal 3:24). Keep in mind, the New Testament reveals Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy.

In the following section you’ll notice “several words” have been used in Scripture to define God, because God far exceeds any single word; remember, none of us can be completely defined by a single word, yet when applying words to GOD, it is far less exacting than the words that define us... because God possesses an eternal nature that completely transcends human thinking, God cannot be fully defined. Remember, God is infinite (i.e., without limitation), so nothing completely defines Him. With that in mind, consider the following — the very first chapter of the Bible (Genesis one) teaches us some significant things about God and ourselves: God is the source of all that exists (i.e., He’s the Creator of all things), and the Eternal One who is in control of all things. Remember the first words of God’s Revelation are these: “In the beginning GOD created the heavens and the earth” (cf. Gen 1:1). With that in mind, it would be helpful to remember that God not only “spoke” everything into existence, but that the vast galaxy we live in is spinning at the incredible speed of 490,000 miles an hour; yet even at this breakneck speed, our galaxy still needs some 200 million years to simply make one rotation... keep in mind, in addition to that, you need to remember, there are over one billion other galaxies just like ours in the universe! Obviously God has created an incredible universe! It’s interesting to note, the complex sea of spinning stars functions with remarkable order & efficiency! None of the galaxies are out of control and destroying other galaxies, because they are all in perfect control! Remember there are trillions of stars in the universe! As God’s revel-

ation says, “By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God!” (cf. Heb 11:3; Gen 1:3, 6, 7, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26; Jn 1:1-3; Col 1:16-17). It might be best for some of you to carefully reflect upon what this paragraph states. Is it any wonder why Albert Einstein, one of the greatest scientists in world history said, “The scientist is possessed by the sense of universal causation... His religious feeling takes the form of a rapturous amazement at the harmony of natural law, which reveals an intelligence of such superiority that, compared with it, all the systematic thinking and acting of human beings is an utterly insignificant reflection” — let me encourage you to read again what Einstein said. The reality is this: man’s thinking in comparison with God’s thinking, is only an inch deep; the truth is, the human race knows very little of reality; as previously stated, man knows almost nothing in comparison with God.

Again, the first verse in the Bible is this: “In the beginning GOD created the heavens and the earth” (cf. Gen 1:1). The word “GOD” in the book of Genesis is “Elohim” in Hebrew — it appears over 200 times in the book of Genesis, and over 2,300 times throughout the entire Old Testament. Due to the fact that the next few paragraphs may be a little difficult for some of you to fully contemplate, you may want to skip two or three paragraphs, and then start reading again... I don’t want you to think that this entire study is too difficult a study for you to read. Now during the Mosaic period “El” (the root word of Elohim) was often used by Moses; it was synonymous with the “LORD” who delivered the Israelites from bondage in Egypt — this term was actually an abbreviated term, and it appears over 200 times in the Old Testament. Incidentally, the word “El” was prominent in both poetry & prophecy (cf. Ps 7:11; 85:8; Is 43:12; 46:9) — the term was commonly used by the Israelites to denote supernatural division or power. Then there is the Aramaic word “Elah,” the equivalent of the Hebrew word “Eloah;” it is a generic term for “God” in the Aramaic passages of the Old Testament. The term was used 43 times in the book of Ezra (cf. 4:24; 5:1, 8, 12, 15, 17; 6:3, 7, 9, 10, 12, 17; 7:2, 12, 19, 26)... 36 times in the book of Daniel (cf. 2:18, 19, 20, 23, 28; 3:29; 4:2, 9; 5:3, 18, 21, 23, 26; 6:5, 7), and 40 times in the book of Job. By the way, that word Aramaic was a Semitic language that was closely related to the Hebrew language — in the ancient world the Palestinians embraced Hebrew as the language of the common people back in the 9th and 10th century BC (cf. Acts 22:2); so the Jewish world back then had strongly influenced the Palestinian world. Let’s expand upon the word “Aramaic:” “Aram” was the son of Shem, one of the three sons of Noah (Gen 5:32; 10:22); the portion of the earth that was occupied by the descendants of Shem stretched from the Mediterranean Sea to the Indian Ocean — it included Syria, Chaldea, parts of Assyria, Persia, and the Arabian peninsula. The eminent spiritual blessings of Shem are fulfilled in the Messiah, who came from the line of Shem (cf. Gen 11:10-32; 21:1-5; Mt 1:2-16; Rom 9:3-5). So the Aramaic world strongly identified with much of what was going on in the Jewish world, including the fact that they spoke the Hebrew language. Aram was the progenitor of the Aramaean people (cf. Gen 10:22-23) who spread widely in Syria & Mesopotamia. During Israel’s long term sojourn in Egypt, the Aramaeans were growing in number throughout the entire area; the maternal ancestry of Jacob’s children was Aramaic (cf. Deut 26:5). By the time King Saul came on the throne in Israel, numerous Aramaean districts appeared prominently in Old

Testament narratives (cf. 1 Kg 11: 23-24; 2 Sam 8; Josh 12:5; 13:11; Deut 3:14; 2 Sam 5:8; 13:37; Num 13: 21; Judg 18:28; 2 Sam 10:6). Interestingly enough, a few parts of the Old Testament were actually written in Aramaic (cf. Ezra 4:8 to 6:18; 7:12-26; Dan 2:4-7:28; Jer 10:11). Remember, Aramaic was a semitic language that was similar to Hebrew... and many Aramaeans were in the city of Damascus (the capital of Syria), which had close historical ties to Israel — the city of Damascus is located about 50 miles northeast of the Sea of Galilee, and explorations indicate that it was established in 3,000 BC (over 5,000 years ago; many historians believe Damascus may be the oldest city in existence); by the way, Damascus is referred to more than 60 times in Scripture (46 times in the Old Testament, and 15 times in the New Testament). Seven times Damascus is referred to in Acts chapter nine — by the way, it was in Damascus that Saul (who later became the apostle Paul) was blinded by God and became God's premiere apostle, and it was in the city of Damascus where Paul first preached the gospel (cf. Acts 9).

Now regarding God, the Bible records several names of God — to list a few, He is referred to as God, as Lord, as Jehovah (Yahweh in Hebrew); incidentally Jehovah has always been regarded as the most sacred name of God in the Old Testament; as such it is used of Israel's God (no other God). Jesus referred to Himself as the Alpha and the Omega... the first and the last... the beginning and the end (cf. Rev 22:13; 21:6; 1:8; 1:17). Said the Lord to Isaiah the prophet: “I am the first and the last, and there is no God beside Me” (Is 44:6). Said the Apostle John, “All things came into being by God; apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being” (cf. Jn 1:3); keep in mind, those emboldened words are emphatic in Greek. Now regarding the names of God, the Hebrew term “Yahweh” (which is pronounced “Jehovah” in English) literally means “Lord” in Hebrew... more precisely the Hebrew term Yahweh comes from the Hebrew verb “to be” (Hayah). The Jewish people considered the word Yahweh too sacred to be uttered, thus they removed the vowels from the term and simply expressed it with the word “YHWH” (JHVH in English — YHWH was unspeakable in Hebrew because there were no vowels). Remember the word of the Lord to the prophet Moses, “I AM WHO I AM”... “I am has sent Me to you” and “The Lord has sent Me to you” (Ex 3:14-15). The name “I AM” is based on the clause “I AM WHO I AM” (Ex 3:14); carefully reflect upon that statement. Down through the ages God has said, “I am what I am... I will be what I will be... I am because I am... I am He who is... I am He who exists... I am the One who is... I am Yahweh” (cf. Ex 20:2; Deut 6:5). God said to the prophet Isaiah, “I am the Lord, there is no other... and My will I will not give to another” (cf. Is 42:9; 45:5, 18, 22; 47:8, 10). Beloved, GOD is the first and the last (cf. Is 41:4; 44:6; 48:12)... the Eternal, the Almighty, the Living One (Ps 36:10)... and the Creator of heaven and earth (Gen 1:1). So GOD was declaring to both Moses and Isaiah that He is the Eternal One, who is self-existent, self-sufficient, uncaused, independent, and the absolute sovereign One. Only the Creator of all things can call Himself “the I AM” because no one else is eternal except God Himself... all other creatures came into existence through Him. Incidentally, the Hebrew term “I AM” is rendered “LORD” (Ex 6:2-8); so there is only ONE LORD who exists in the universe and that is GOD Himself. God revealed Himself to Moses as “Jehovah (Yahweh in Hebrew),

the Great IAM;” Jesus applied the words “**I am**” to Himself in John 8:58, which not only denoted His preexistence but associated Him with Yahweh. Remember, Jesus was the fulfillment of the promise given to Abraham (cf. Jn 8:56). The almighty power of Yahweh that is displayed in this name is manifested in the sphere of history (cf. Ps 46:6-7; 59:5); thus Yahweh is sometimes referred to as “**the Almighty**” (cf. Gen 17:1; 35:11; Job 21:15; Rev 4:8). As previously stated, the name **Jehovah** (Yahweh in Hebrew) was the most common name used of God in the Hebrew world. God Himself had summarized what He teaches us about Himself—in so doing, He used the word **Elohim** to describe His work of creation, and the word **Jehovah** to describe His work of redemption; by the way the word **Jehovah** (which is **Yahweh** in Hebrew) appears 279 times in the Old Testament (77 times in Jeremiah, 54 times in Isaiah, and 44 times in Zechariah).

Be sure to read this paragraph if you have already skipped some. Now since God is infinite & eternal, and the Creator and Ruler of all things, finite creatures cannot fully understand Him, because God vastly transcends that which is finite. Again, the premiere word for God in the Old Testament is **Elohim**, and that word corresponds with the Greek word “**Theos**” as well as the English word “**Deity**.” Though these terms are used to give brief definition to God, the totality of what Scripture teaches about God is what humanity can actually know about God—keep in mind, there is no one word that comes close to fully defining God, because He is infinite and eternal; so the foregoing are simply **names** ascribed to God. The ultimate truth is “**God exists**” and He has revealed Himself in His divine word. Remember, **though God is ONE, He is three persons in ONE – God the Father... God the Son... and God the Holy Spirit**; thus, as has been stated several times, God has a triune nature that is completely unfathomable to man. It is also interesting to note that **Religion** gradually took the place of **God** as the object of theology; **thus human knowledge and the Christian faith became man's premiere focus**. The reality is, **the incarnation of Jesus Christ has become the dominant concept in the Christian world**. Though the attempt to prove God’s existence with temporal minds is simply not possible nevertheless, **temporal reality** strongly suggests that God indeed does exist—the truth is, there is absolutely no evidence whatsoever for **evolution**; contrary to what some of you might think, all evidence points to **creation**. The problem with fallen man is that he embraces fallen thinking over ultimate reality (that will make more sense to you later). **By the way, the next paragraph is a very important one**, so give it very careful consideration.

As mentioned above, the Greek word for God is “**Theos**;” it appears 1266 times in the New Testament (cf. Mt 1:23; 4:4; 22:32; Mk 1:15; 10:18; Jn 1:1; Rom 8:31; Eph 2:8; 1 Tim 2:5; 1 Pet 5:5). Since the Greek language became the language of the entire Mediterranean world when **Alexander the Great** conquered it back in 4th century BC (by the way, his school master was the great Greek philosopher **Aristotle**)... Alexander has been viewed by historians as **one of the most outstanding military & organized geniuses in human history**; by the time of his death in 323 BC he had conquered an empire that spanned the Middle East all the way to the western reaches of India, as well as Syria, Palestine and Egypt. Wherever he went he dispensed the **Greek language and culture**—which was known as “**Hellenism**”

(a derivative of the word “*hellas*” — Greek for the nation Greece); incidentally, Hellenism is often associated with Greek philosophy, as well as the philosophy of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle; keep in mind, Greek philosophers were essentially religious people, providing explanations of the universe and offering salvation through human reason (cf. Holman Bible Dictionary; p. 746). Now since Rome had been conquered by the Greek culture, when Rome took over the Mediterranean world 200 years later, it became known as the Greco-Roman world. Thus when Christianity arose in the first century AD when Christ came into the world, Greek was the common language, and according to the Holman Bible Dictionary, many linguists call it the most flexible language ever devised; hence it was used by God's servants to share the Gospel Message with the entire Greco-Roman world (remember, all of this was the work and plan of God in our world; this wasn't mere human happenstance). According to theologians the Greek influence on divine truth is immeasurable. Remember, back in the 3rd century BC, seventy-two Jewish scholars went to Alexandria, Egypt, to translate the Hebrew Bible (*i.e.*, the Old Testament) into Greek, because the nation of Israel like all other Mediterranean nations had been speaking Greek for over a hundred years (the vast Jewish majority back then did not speak Hebrew), so in order for Jewish people to know what Scripture says, they needed to read a Greek version of it, because very few Jews understood Hebrew; so Scripture was translated into Greek so that Greek-speaking Jews could read and understand it — again, this was the work of GOD, not man! By the way, this particular version of Scripture was known as the Septuagint (a derivative of the word “seventy” in Greek; instead of using the word 72 they rounded it off and simply used the word 70). By the way, Jesus Himself often quoted the Greek Septuagint in his preaching, so the Greek language was highly esteemed; remember, it was a God-given dynamic for the Mediterranean world! It's also important to remember that the city of Alexandria on the north shore of Egypt became the premiere city in the Greco-Roman world, and was named after Alexander the Great. Now with the foregoing in mind, the Greek word appropriated by the Jews to define Christ when He entered into the world was “Theos,” which literally means “the one true God.” Wrote the apostle John, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was GOD” (Jn 1:1); that word “God” is “Theos” in Greek — remember, the entire New Testament was written in Greek, which is the most defining language in the history of the world, no other language is as definitive as the ancient Greek language; again, God knew exactly what He was doing when He made it the premiere language of the world. By the way ancient Greek is not a coequivalent of modern-day Greek, because like every other language that exists, they all undergo a lot of changes over time — including our English language. So “Hellenistic Greek” was the language that was spoken in the Greco-Roman world back in the first century; it later became known as Koine Greek, and that was the language in which the New Testament was written. Since the vast majority of people back in the first century spoke Koine Greek (only 15-20 percent of the population was literate & educated and understood Classical and Atticizing Greek, so the most scholarly version of Greek was not used by the masses; and since everyone “spoke Koine Greek,” Jesus and His disciples used it when preaching & writing Scripture). That shouldn't be a difficult construct for any of you to accept if you understand how “words” change over time; thus the theo-

logical world interprets things exactly how they were stated in Scripture nearly 2,000 years ago (so they don't use modern-day Greek to define what Scripture says). Remember, our English language has made numerous changes down through the centuries with its language; that is simply the way language has always worked in our world.

The existence of God is the great presupposition of theology; there is no point in speaking of the **knowledge of God** unless one assumes that God exists. According to divine revelation, there is an eternal, self-existent, personal being who is the origin of all things, and such transcends the entire created order. The truth of God's existence is accepted by people when they humble themselves before God; in so doing they will accept it by faith, because God gives grace to the humble, as such man can be fully convinced and believe in divine truth — the reality is, proud, arrogant, self-centered people will never believe in God — said Jesus, “Men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil (i.e., their deeds do not correspond with God's will); everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds be exposed” (cf. Jn 3:19-20). The truth is, God does not simply permit fallen man to logically embrace divine truth — **humility of heart is essential for man to embrace divine truth.** So divine truth is not simply the result of human logic; why's that? because it vastly transcends finite human thinking (did you hear that? that's a very critical statement). Thus to make divine truth some simplistic reality is absolute nonsense, because man is a fallen creature. Remember, **God only gives grace to the humble!** So the true born-again Christian fully accepts the existence of God by faith (i.e., by believing what God says), because God has revealed it to his heart by the Holy Spirit... unless God opens one's heart and mind to divine truth, man will simply not believe and embrace it; **so faith ultimately is a gift of God** — Eph 2:8). Let me state it again, define truth is the resultant effect of GOD opening one's heart and mind to what is true; so this thing called “faith” is not the byproduct of man... **it is a “gift” that God gives to those who humble themselves before Him** (cf. Eph 2:8-9; 2 Tim 1:9; Acts 16:14; Rom 6:23; Jam 4:6). Remember, God doesn't cast His pearls before swine (Matt 7:6). Sheer arrogance is completely unacceptable to God; therefore, if you insist on believing in divine reality simply with human thinking and human logic, you won't truly believe in the God of Creation or the God of the Bible (again, give that careful consideration). Remember the words of Paul, “Hath God not made foolish the wisdom (thinking) of the world? For since in the wisdom of God the world did not come to know God by his own wisdom... God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe” (1 Cor 1:20-21); remember, those who humbled themselves before God when He spoke to them (either by Jesus or his disciples), they believed the message (which is simply what faith is); keep in mind, those emboldened words in that last verse are **emphatic** in Greek, so read it accordingly. According to the psalmist David, “The fool says in his heart, there is no God” (cf. Ps 14:1) — theoretical atheists attempt to justify that there is no God by rational argumentation that there is no valid proof that there is a God (as previously stated). Therefore, keep in mind, finite human thinking cannot conceive of that which is infinite (i.e., God). Now interestingly enough, over time rational arguments for the existence of God developed all over the world — men like Socrates, Plato and Aristotle and

numerous other philosophers argued for the existence of God; obviously, they were not merely as arrogant as the diabolical left is here in America; essentially they argued that since mankind has an idea of an absolutely perfect being, that one must exist; yet the fact that the idea of God exists in the minds of men does not prove His existence. So here is man believing in God's existence, yet not having proof that He really does exist. Little does fallen man know, **God has revealed Himself to the minds of men that they might believe in Him and live life accordingly. It is man's self-centered nature that causes him to question God's existence and live a self-centered life** (cf. Rom 1:18-32; 2:15; Ecc 3:11; Acts 17:22-31) — interestingly enough, nearly 90% of all the people in the world embrace some kind of religion; **it is basically only the arrogant people in the western world who are atheistic, ungodly, and irreligious.** So the idea of an infinite God has characterized the thinking of most people in our world since the earliest years of man's existence, yet they saw themselves as being good self-righteous people and a people whom God accepts.

Now regarding the term **Theism, it has always regarded God as an absolute personal being of infinite perfections.** So with the foregoing in mind, ultimately **faith** (i.e., humbly believing God's self-revelation) must be the foundation of our lives; anything else will simply be the result of fallen self-centered thinking. Again, though God is not fully comprehensible, He is **knowable** to the point where one is absolutely confident in His existence, and actually experiences salvation and the forgiveness of sin. Keep in mind, when God opens one's heart and mind to divine truth, he truly believes what God says (that is the essence of faith); he doesn't question it and doubt it, and simply give remedial attention to it; true genuine faith believes what God says. **Martin Luther** often spoke of God as being a **hidden God**, in spite of the fact that He is a **revealed God**; so the full essence of God is incomprehensible and unknowable. Though we can learn much about God through His self-revelation (i.e., through what His word teaches), we can only learn that which His written word reveals to us. **Again, though fallen finite man can understand that which is adequate for embracing Christ as his Savior and Lord, he doesn't have the ability to fully understand infinite wisdom** because he simply doesn't have the capacity to do so. **Remember, man comes to know God when he humbles himself and asks God for the grace to know Him and believe in Him,** because God only gives grace and understanding to the humble (cf. Jam 4:6; 1 Pet 5:5; Acts 6:14; Lk 24:45; 1 Cor 12:3; 1 Th 1:5). Keep in mind, **God is the One who communicates knowledge of Himself to man;** thus man can only know God when God actively makes Himself known to him. It is also important to remember, many people simply believe their innate thinking, in spite of the fact that **they never spend significant time studying anything that runs counter to their thinking;** they simply embrace their own narrow-minded fleshly thinking, regardless of the fact it does not correlate with ultimate reality. This is simply the way fallen man operates: he simply focuses on some construct that meshes with his own fallen thinking (or something he was taught), and in so doing convinces himself of what it is he is going to believe; yet as previously stated, **he does not study both sides of the equation...** thus he simply believes what his fleshly mind states. What's important to remember is that every single person in existence **believes in the need to be a moral creature and to live a moral life,** because of the existence of a divine reality

(remember, God has made Himself evident to the minds of all men – Rom 1:18-20 – nevertheless, some don't give much attention to the ultimate reality of the universe (*i.e.*, God). Now due to the fact that most people in our world give a degree of attention to God, they live a reasonably moral life, and see themselves as being pleasing to God. With the foregoing in mind, *the leftists here in our country reject the religious view that God indeed exists; as such, they accuse the Christian world of believing nonsense!* (again read Rom 1:18-32). *They even make unmerited claims that the Bible is full of errors and contradictions, when in fact IT IS NOT!* The truth is, they have not even studied the Bible, so they know nothing about the “*context*” that gives definition to what it actually says. That is simply how the godless left operates; *it simply attacks things with absolutely no evidence whatsoever. It is man's reluctance to study both sides of an issue that is extremely common among the masses in our world; they simply embrace what their innate flesh believes.* Because there is so much false-hood being spoken in our world, many people believe that nonsense, in spite of the fact that there is absolutely no evidence whatsoever that affirms such thinking (essentially, it is all the work of Satan in the minds of men – said Jesus to a few diabolical Jewish leaders, “*You are of your father the devil; the father of lies*” – cf. Jn 8:44). Keep in mind, when all one does is mix together those things his flesh embraces, he will develop his own construct of thought and those things he will value in life; remember, when one simply focuses on certain things in life, those things will ultimately control what he ultimately chooses to believe. The reality is, without humility before God, one will simply believe his own fallen thinking.

Furthermore, since God is an *eternal infinite reality*, man cannot fully define God, because *man is a finite creature with extreme limitations in comparison to God;* that would be like taking a nickels worth of smarts and using it to define trillions upon trillions of dollars worth of smarts... the truth is, the entire scientific world doesn't even understand exactly what exists more than a few miles deep in the earth (which is way over a thousand miles deep). Thus many philosophers & scientists in our country constantly misinterpret things in our world, be it physical reality, physical change, climate change, iceberg issues, oceanic changes, temperature changes, and this thing called *evolution* (which is completely lacking in evidence; yet the arrogant western world does everything it can to get people to embrace it; remember, if there was evidence that supports evolution, the entire scientific world would embrace it!). Due to the fact things did not “*evolve in the universe,*” they were “*created;*” and it is that reality that the arrogant diabolical left refuses to accept— incidentally, only the leftists here in America are sold out to the *theory of evolution;* keep in mind, it is called a “*theory*” (even by evolutionists) because there is absolutely no proof or evidence that it exists! Interestingly enough, the vast majority of scientists in the British and European world *mock the leftists here in America* because of their foolishness to claim that evolution defines reality, when in fact “*there is no evidence whatsoever to support that claim!*” Remember, *the diabolical left in our country absolutely despises this thing called GOD, and those who believe in Him;* thus they simply insist that evolution defines reality, *because if things did not evolve, there is a GOD!* (and that is something they won't accept; *therefore the diabolical left embraces evolution, and does all it can to convince the world*

that there is no God, and that they are the premiere voice in our world, contrary to the fact that the scientific world has concluded that anything that possesses design, order & function, was MADE! (i.e., CREATED!).

To give more consideration to the foregoing, the renowned French scientist, Pierre P. Grasse, who wrote the book “Evolution of Living Organisms,” closed it by saying that biology is powerless to explain the origin of living things, that it may have to yield to metaphysics, or possibly to the concept of supernatural creation of some kind. He argued that the “explanatory doctrines of biological evolution do not stand up to an objective in-depth criticism, because they proved to either be in conflict with reality, or else incapable of solving the major problem involved.” The French scientist Louis Bounour, former president of the Biological Society of Strasbourg, and more recently director of research at the French National Center of Scientific Research, startled many of his scientific colleagues when he declared that “Evolution is a fairy tale for grownups... this theory has helped nothing in the progress of science. It is useless.” That’s a pretty harsh indictment coming from two of the world’s most respected scientists. Renowned paleontologist and evolutionary biologist Steven M. Stanley states, “No human has ever seen a new species form in nature; [in fact], the fossil record does not convincingly document a single transition from one species to another.” American geologist David B. Kitts says, “Evolution requires intermediate forms between species. and paleontology does not provide them.” Evolutionary theorist Lynn Margulis responds, “I have seen no evidence whatsoever that these [evolutionary] changes can occur through the accumulation of gradual mutations.” Evolutionary geneticist and phylogeographer David S. Woodruff says, “Fossil species remain unchanged throughout most of their history and the [fossil] record fails to contain a single example of a significant transition.” Sir John Templeton writes in his book, “The Humble Approach: Scientists Discover God,” that “materialists overlook the spiritual realities because they get trapped in the purely physical.” Keep in mind, the foregoing statements are from some of the world’s most prominent scientists. Now in spite of these statements, we still see a deep-seated bitterness on behalf of many in the scientific community toward the idea of supernatural creation. The question automatically arises: Why do so many evolutionary scientists have such an animus against religion? And why do they argue so vehemently in defense of evolution? In 1981, The British Museum of Natural History in London opened a new exhibit on evolution to mark its one hundredth anniversary. One of the world’s leading scientific journals, Nature (an American publication) ran a critical editorial in response to the British Museum’s suggestion that evolution by natural selection was only one of a number of possible explanations. Two weeks later, twenty-two members of the British museum’s distinguished staff of biologists wrote the following letter to the editor of the “Nature” journal –

Sir, as working biologists at the British Museum of Natural History we were astonished to read your editorial.... How is it that a journal such as yours that is devoted to science and its practice can advocate that theory actually be presented as fact? This is the stuff of prejudice, not science, and as sci-

tists our basic concern is to keep an open mind on the unknowable.... Are we to take it that evolution is a fact, proven to the limits of scientific rigor? If that is the inference then we must disagree most strongly. We have absolutely no absolute proof of the theory of evolution.

Stephen Hawking is one of the world's most respected cosmologists. He holds the position at Cambridge University once held by Sir Isaac Newton, and has been hailed by *Time Magazine* as "an equal of Einstein." When addressing the subject of origins Hawking said, "I think there are clearly religious implications whenever you start to discuss the origins of the universe.... But I think most scientists prefer to stay away from the religious side of it.... The odds against a universe that has produced life like ours are immense." **Albert Einstein**, perhaps the greatest scientist of the 20th century, developed the famous equation E=mc², which states "Energy resides in mass (objects), and that mass is a form of energy." A number of years later this theory was confirmed by experiment. Einstein's work was astonishing to scientists all over the world, and his theory of energy became a foundation stone in the development of nuclear energy. Ultimately, he worked out equations that he said brought humanity "closer to the secrets of the Old One [i.e., God]." When commenting on quantum mechanics, he responded to his friend, **Max Born**: "Quantum mechanics is certainly imposing. But an inner voice tells me it is not yet the real thing. The theory says a lot, but does not really bring us any closer to the secret of 'the Old One.' I, at any rate, am convinced that He [God] is not playing dice." Einstein's scientific inspiration was rooted in the fact that he believed the cosmos was the product of a Supernatural Transcendent Reality.

Beloved, for your sake, look at everything you possess; you'll notice everything you possess was MADE... nothing you possess evolved! be it your toilet, your bed, your radio, and television, your knives and forks, your pans and plates, your computer and phone, your dollar bills and coins, and your car and house; etc.! Now keep in mind, in the 20th century, the scientific world discovered that everything in existence is in a state of decline (i.e., everything is dying)... thus, not a single thing has always existed as **Carl Sagan** and numerous scientists had believed; incidentally, Carl Sagan was a highly noted cosmological professor at Cornell University, and an outspoken atheist who claimed that "God does not exist because the universe has always existed, thus nature is all that is or ever was or ever will be!" (that's exactly what he stated). Keep in mind, Carl Sagan had a nationwide television program for years and constantly claimed "GOD does not exist!" that GOD is simply a by-product of human thinking, and that our planet and galaxy has always existed; therefore GOD does not exist, because our planet was not created as this thing called the Bible declares, "therefore we need to stop believing in this GOD stuff!" However, when science discovered that the entire universe is in a state of decline (i.e., that it is dying), it could only have existed for a very short period of time, in comparison with an endless period of time; thus the scientific world concluded that the entire universe would be completely dead now if it existed for all eternity, because nothing lives forever that is dying! So when science measured the decline, science concluded that the entire universe had

exploded into existence 13.7 billion years ago (that's when everything came into existence), and this explosion is referred to as "**The Big Bang!**" Such is now the leading explanation in our world about how the universe began; though it was initially discovered 1907, it wasn't until the 1960s that the scientific world fully embraced it after studying it in great depth. Keep in mind, throughout most of human history, observers of the sky had assumed it was eternal and unchanging; yet science now sees it for what it really is, "an expanding universe" (that all matter in the universe was created in one big bang, and the universe just kept expanding). Incidentally, it is cosmic microwave background radiation (CMB), that the vast majority of researchers now consider it to be the strongest evidence for the Big Bang. Remember, science has concluded that the planet on which we live did not come into existence until 7.3 billion years later; thus planet earth did not come into existence until 4.5 billion years ago. As a result of the foregoing, "evolutionary thinking has now been declared false and not at all possible!" Now with the foregoing in mind, the Bib Bang demonstrates the scientific validity of a created, non-eternal universe. Empirical data lends credibility to the idea of a biblical Creator and contradicts alternative explanations, such as an eternal universe or abiogenesis.

The problem with so many arrogant minds in our world (in particular diabolical left here in America), is that they love to control the discourse on the world stage, and have the world population worship at their altar; in spite of the fact that "they have absolutely no evidence to support their diabolical claims" — it should be obvious to everyone, one can only know how difficult it is for proud arrogant people to admit that they were WRONG! They would rather lie and lie and lie then admit they were wrong! Now with foregoing in mind, we are now going to discuss "The Evidence that God Exists!" According to what God's Word says, King Solomon was the wisest man whoever lived or whoever will live (1 Kg 3:7-12), and he said the following: "Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him" (Prov 26:12) — though ignorant fools can be helped at times, conceited men are completely impervious to advice. As the psalmist David said, "The conceited fool says there is no God; thus God makes arrogant people complete fools, because God doesn't tolerate extreme arrogance" (read Psalm 14:1; 31:23; 53:1; 94:2; Rom 1:18-32; Jam 4:6; 1 Pet 5:5) — keep in mind, for someone to say "there is no God," is to say something that is completely lacking in evidence; there is absolutely no evidence whatsoever that God does not exist, yet here are some individuals insisting that God does not exist! Now with the foregoing in mind, though some of you may argue to the contrary, the scientific world essentially has proven that nearly every person in existence has the same quality of mind (regardless of where they live in the world; be it in a small tribe, out in the forest, on a farm, in a tiny little town, or in a large metropolitan area)... so it is not as if half of the world is smart and the other half is stupid! So being smart has nothing at all to do with being educated (as numerous American fools claim). Incidentally, in the middle of the 20th century a number of German scientists examined several tribal groups that existed in Africa and several other places, whom the world frequently referred to as "semi-humans;" little did they know, they were about to discover that all human beings essentially possess "equal minds!" They actually discovered that the tribal people in the world were not at

all somewhat animalistic as many people thought (essentially that's what society believed here in America back in the middle of the 20th century). Yet here were German scientists discovering that tribal people were actually human beings like anyone else! Remember, back in the 20th century, people were still believing that some tribal people had still not fully evolved into human beings (that they still had some animalistic qualities). What was amazing to these scientists was that they discovered something that was absolutely shocking to them; here were small tribal people speaking languages that possessed two & three times more vocabulary words than our western languages possess (imagine if you will having a vocabulary of 45,000 to 60,000 words rather than 15,000 to 20,000 words; which essentially is what western-world languages possess). Furthermore, due to the fact that most of the tribal languages were not yet in "writing," their memories far exceeded those who lived with written languages. Though many people in our world believed that tribal people were essentially animalistic and stupid, that did not at all define them!!! They were actually smarter and more gifted than many people here in the western world; which just showed how stupid & arrogant many people were in the western world less than a hundred years ago. So what science learned was this: the entire human world has "equal minds" (only people who are born with certain problems have problematic minds), thus everyone of us possess minds that are very equal (which is simply the way God made us), in spite of the fact that the educated people here in America still like to think that they are the brilliant geniuses of the world! Keep in mind, the diabolical left in Washington D.C. today, claims to be vastly smarter than the rest of the people in our world! It wasn't very long ago that I received letters from the diabolical left making that claim, because they absolutely hated divine truth! Once again, our country is filled with numerous arrogant fools!

Let's return to the topic we were addressing earlier – when the scientific world ultimately looked at billions of things that exist that possessed design, function and order, they concluded that all those things that exist are actually governed by a "LAW"; i.e., all that exists is being controlled and governed by an absolute Law (thus reality is not mere happenstance that is completely uncontrolled)... so design, function and order was created (made); nothing of the kind simply evolved! As such the world of science from that point on "rejected evolution" for any item that possesses design, function or order; though some philosophers insist on embracing evolution as a reality, THE SCIENTIFIC WORLD DOES NOT EMBRACE EVOLUTION! Remember, philosophers are simply people who embrace their own thinking; they are not scientists who insist on examining the depth of things and getting absolute proof... philosophers simply believe what they want to believe – all they do is wrestle with this thing called "logic," and when it is pleasing to them, they voice their opinion; incidentally, that has always defined the philosophical world, even in ancient Greece. On the contrary, the world of science insists on embracing reality with evidence; keep in mind, science is a systematic method of knowing and understanding the physical world and the universe in which we live, and it is the laws of science that govern their thinking. The truth is, the world of science has not seen any evidence whatsoever that supports evolution; thus as far as they are concerned, nothing in the universe simply evolved; i.e., nothing the scientific world discovered was in any way contrary to their

physical laws (that's why they are called "Laws" – they are absolute)... thus there is an absolute foundation for everything that exists; by the way, that is how the **First & Second Laws of Thermodynamics** came into existence – when certain physical realities were PROVEN to be true, THESE TWO LAWS were established! Take a moment and reflect upon the following: imagine looking at billions of things and ALWAYS concluding that they were MADE, and never once concluding that anything that possesses design, function or order simply evolved. Keep in mind, if all the little things that I shared with you early on were MADE, how could they have been made by someone or something that evolved? It should be obvious to everyone, anything that is made is not nearly as brilliant and gifted as that which made it – let's say you made something; is it greater and smarter than you are? Of course not, those who make things are always far smarter than that which they have made; how could anyone think something to the contrary? To do so would be a complete contradiction of the Laws of Thermodynamics! Remember, everything is on a downward plight, yet here are people reversing the issue and making things better after several years! Beloved, man has got to be pretty stupid to say that he evolved and that all of his skill sets were a part of evolution. Obviously with Satan on the throne in the minds of men, it is not surprising that fallen man makes such silly deductions... the surprising reality is, most people in our world do not make that deduction, because the vast majority of them believe in some kind of God; the truth is, about 90% of everyone in our world embraces some kind of religion; remember, God has made Himself evident to everyone who exists (cf. Rom 1:19ff; 2:14-15; Acts 17:22ff; Ecc 3:11). Keep in mind, only the diabolical left here in America and a few other places in the world refuse to embrace this thing called GOD at any level.

Now when comparing man's thinking with God's thinking, keep in mind, man's IQ is far less than 200 – the average human being has an IQ of about 115 (thus his IQ is extremely limited), whereas **GOD's "IQ" is trillions upon trillions of times greater** (actually it is endless), it is only the foolishness of finite man that insists on knowing what he cannot know! Said King Solomon, "I set my mind to seek and explore by wisdom concerning all that has been done under heaven – it is a grievous task which God has given to the sons of men to be afflicted with" (cf. Ecc 1:13, 17); the truth is, man simply doesn't have the capacity to fully understand reality. Said Isaiah the prophet, "Who has known the mind of the Lord, that He should instruct Him?" (cf. Is 40:13; 1 Cor 2:16); that simply transcends human thinking. God speaks of His essence in Proverbs: "Counsel is Mine and sound wisdom; I am understanding, and power is Mine. By Me kings reign, and rulers decree justice... I love those who love Me, and those who diligently seek Me will find Me... My fruit is better than pure gold and the choicest silver" (cf. Prv 8:14-19). The Bible identifies God as "the Living God who enters into a relationship with His creatures." The Apostle Peter said, "God's divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them we might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust" (2 Pet 1:3-4); keep in mind, those emboldened words are emphatic

in Greek (so read it accordingly). It's important to note, though we as believers partake of God's divine nature as stated earlier, we do not fully partake of God's divine essence. Remember, "*God is Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and truth*" (Jn 4:24). As believers, we now possess a *spiritual life*, wherein we are to walk with God & the Holy Spirit (cf. 2 Cor 5:17; 1 Cor 6:19; Gal 5:16, 24, 25). It's important to remember, *only when we have a humble heart do we embrace divine reality*; when we are proud autonomous creatures, we will not embrace divine reality, because it will deny us of our own personal autonomy; that should not be a difficult construct for a believer to understand. As we have stated numerous times, God is simply not fully comprehensible, because *finite* minds cannot fully comprehend that which is *infinite*. Remember the words of Job's friend Zophar, "*Can you discover the depth of God? Can you discover the limits of the Almighty? It is as high as the heavens, what can you do? Deeper than Sheol, so what can you know?*" (Job 11:7-8). Keep in mind, apart from the revelations of God, we have no knowledge of His divine nature; *but in so far as God reveals Himself, we do have some knowledge of Him*; so everything we can know is subject to human limitations. The great protestant reformer, *Martin Luther*, reminded the world that *God even in His revelation did not manifest Himself entirely as He essentially is; thus God possesses an impenetrable darkness.*

Now as believers, we each have a general idea as to *who God is & how He operates* in our lives, yet time and time again things do not go as we thought they would or hoped they would; as such we often experience a level of consternation in our souls. All of us as Christians often pray to God for things that we desire and need, yet frequently God does not give us what we ask for. *The next two paragraphs are extremely important for you to understand, so give very serious consideration to what these two paragraphs state.* With the foregoing in mind, millions of Christians here in America prayed that President Trump would get reelected (some churches actually held large prayer meetings), that the believing world would be greatly encouraged; but such did not happen. Why was that? Why did God let an arrogant man like *Biden* win the election? Well without divine knowledge, one can easily question God... after all, Biden is not a believer, and much of what he and Obama did when they served together as President & Vice-President, was not only *anti-Christ*, but strongly *anti-Christian*; over and over again they constantly took actions to denigrate Christians and deny them any input (they actually denied them the right to pray at any public meeting), as if Christianity was the premiere problem in our world; by the way, hating God & His people is simply the result of the devil governing within them (cf. Jn 8:44). It should be obvious to the entire Christian world that the godless left and Satan are doing all they can to destroy the Christian world; keep in mind, the *Devil & Anti-Christ will be moving into our world at the end of the age* (which is not very far off)... remember, *God has already returned the Jewish people to Israel* — after He let Rome destroy Jerusalem back in 70 AD and spreading the Jewish people all over the world for over 1,900 years, *God is now boing to bring the world to an "end" in the very near future*. Remember the words of Paul to the Roman world: "*By the transgression of the Jewish world, salvation has come to the Gentiles... the Jewish people were broken off because of their unbelief... I do not want you to be uninformed that a partial hardening has happened to*

Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in... and thus all Israel will be saved, and God will remove ungodliness from them when He takes away their sins... remember, the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable” (cf. Rom 11:11, 17, 19, 20, 25, 29). Lord willing you took the time to read those verses, because the end of the age is not very far away! Are you listening? **Many Jewish people are already back in Isarel!!!**

I find it interesting that today’s Roman Catholic Pope (Pope Francis) has aligned himself with the godless left here in the US, and has rejected some very poignant things that Scripture teaches — number one, you never turn your back on the believing world and God’s people! **Never!** (read 1 Jn 2:15-18; 3:11-16; 4:7-8, 11, 20). Remember, the Roman Catholic World has had some good God-fearing popes down through the ages, yet they have also had some very self-centered satanic popes, so what we are experiencing today is not new; by the way, such is what brought about the Protestant Reformation 500 years ago). Keep in mind, Pope Francis does not believe in the existence of hell, and is an outspoken supporter of the godless democratic left here in America, in spite of the fact the Bible says, “Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who substitute darkness for light, and light for darkness” (cf. Is 5:20). Pope Francis does not at all have the respect that Pope John Paul II had in the latter part of the 20th century... Pope John Paul II maintained that anyone who places his or her faith in Christ, and embraces Him for who He is, experiences forgiveness and salvation! (yet that does not define Pope Francis)... and many Catholic Bishops here in America today are strongly against Pope Francis. Now in spite of the fact that God did not have President Trump reelected, like the vast majority of Christians had so hoped and prayed, God obviously had a reason for doing so — remember the words of the apostle Paul to the Church at Rome 1900 years ago: “Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except from God, and these which exist are established by God (so contrary to what anyone may think, governing authorities are not the product of human leadership). Therefore he who resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God” (Rom 13:1-2). Keep in mind, contrary to what you may think, no man rules in our world that God did not place there for a reason; so God is the premiere ruler of everything in our world – He is the one who governs it all — take the time to read what transpired back in the 7th century BC when King Nebuchadnezzar took the Jewish world into captivity in Babylon (Dan 3:1, 5, 15-30; 4:1-3, 24-37).

Now, though we cannot fully understand how God works in our world, and why He often does things that seem to be problematic to us as His people, we must learn to accept what God is doing in our world and in our lives. So the premiere question is this: Why does God often choose “negatives” rather than positives for us as His children? The reality is, God often does not respond to our prayers like we would like Him to; instead, He often lets negatives rule in our lives, which at times can be very disconcerting. Keep in mind, since God is GOD, we must accept reality for what it is; i.e., we must accept God’s will, in spite of the fact that we may not understand why God chose to subject us to a negative rather than a positive. Now with the foregoing in mind, we must do our best to understand what God said to His premiere prophet (Isaiah) in the Old Testament: “**My ways**

are not your ways, and your ways are not My ways; as high as the heavens are above the earth, so are My ways and My thoughts greater than yours” (Is 55:8-9); the reality is, God’s ways frequently are not ours; therefore we must understand that God’s purposes frequently run counter to what we desire. Obviously, that is a very significant issue for us as believers to understand, accept, and embrace; but embrace it we must — remember, God’s will is the will we must embrace! In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus said, “When you pray, pray that Thy will be done” (cf. Mt 6:10; Lk 22:42; Jn 7:17); we are not to pray for our will in life, but for God’s will (read the following passages: Mt 26:42; Lk 22:42; Acts 21:14; Mt 16:24-26; Jn 15:5; Phil 2:5, 12-14; Heb 12:1-3). Remember the words of Jesus to His disciples, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me... whoever loses his life for My sake shall find it; what would a man profit if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul?” (cf. Mt 16:24-26). And then there are the words of the apostle John: “If we ask anything according to God’s will, He hears us” (cf. 1 Jn 5:14). And then there are the words of Jesus to His disciples the night before He went to the cross, “In the world you have tribulation, but take courage, I have overcome the world” (Jn 16:33). Said the Lord to His people, “Do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord... for those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son whom He receives; this He does for our good... All discipline does not seem to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet it ultimately yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness” (cf. Heb 12:5-6, 10-11; Prov 3:11-12); keep in mind, it is not a matter of liking negatives, it is a matter of accepting them for what they are. Since that is a very profound statement, give very careful consideration to it. Keep in mind, God gives us the grace to ACCEPT all we go through in life, not the grace to LIKE all we go through in life. Remember the words of Jesus to His Father the night before He went to the cross, “My Father, if it is possible let this cup pass away from Me; yet not as I will but as Thou wilt” (cf. Mt 26:39; Lk 22:42). Now with all of the foregoing in mind, reflect upon the words of the great protestant reformer, John Calvin: “There is a significant difference between a relative knowledge of God and the absolute knowledge of God” — the reality is, if we desire to make God the ruler of our lives, we must accept and embrace “His will” in life, and not simply let human thinking and fleshly emotions rule in our hearts and minds. Beloved, I’m well aware that the foregoing is a very heavy issue for us as believers, yet that is God’s will for us as His people — remember the words of Jesus to His disciples: “If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me” (cf. Mt 16:24; also Mt 10:38; Lk 14:27). Keep in mind, to deny oneself is to yield to Christ’s control in your life, and not simply insist on making life what you want it to be — the two hindrances that often keep God’s people from a life of discipleship (*i.e.*, following Christ), are doing the best one can to remove all discomfort in life (*i.e.*, making it the premiere goal in your life), and placing significant emphasis on wealth (cf. Mt 16:26).

THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

The attributes of God essentially refer to the divine characteristics, the perfections, and the virtues of God as they are revealed to us in Scripture — without these qualities, God would not be what He is — “GOD.” The most fundamental teaching of the Bible and Christian theology is that God exists and is ultimately in control of the entire universe; such is the foundation upon which all Christian theology is built. Throughout Scripture God’s existence is constantly assumed; in other words Scripture starts with the absolute assumption that GOD IS, and throughout Scripture His attributes are revealed and defined. Remember, the very first verse of the Bible reveals God as the Creator and the Sovereign Lord of heaven and earth — such sets the discourse for Scripture where God is considered the foundation of life and the world. So the premiere biblical question is not whether or not God exist, but who is God and how is He to be known? The fools who deny God (cf. Ps 14:1) do so with philosophical reasoning that is completely nebulous and lacking in evidence; the reality is, they are completely incapable of disproving the absolute existence of God... thus they simply make some affirmations that are the byproduct of fallen fleshly thinking — the truth is, all reality points to the existence of God; no reality whatsoever points to His non-existence. The main problem with fallen finite man is that he simply desires to live a self-centered life without even considering God (cf. Ps 10:4); as such, he completely ignores God, and unrighteously suppresses the knowledge of God (Rom 1:18). So it is fallen man’s self-centeredness that is his problem; his lack of humility is what keeps him from acknowledging God’s presence. Without humility (*i.e.*, acknowledging reality for what it really is), God will not reveal divine truth to such individuals (cf. 1 Cor 2:6-12; Acts 16:14; 17:26-31; Rom 1:18-20; 2:15; Eph 4:18); in so doing they will make themselves the object of fallen human thinking. Now due to the fact that God is infinite, eternal, omnipotent, omniscient & omnipresent, it is not possible for finite creatures to fully understand who God is; nevertheless, Scripture (God’s revelation) gives man a divine understanding of the God of the universe, by addressing more than 30 attributes that describe Him, and these attributes are essential characteristics of His divine being. So with the foregoing in mind, take the time to give careful consideration to each of God’s attributes as they are revealed in His Word; in so doing God will not only help you understand who He really is, but how significant a reality He is in the lives of those who make Him their Lord and Savior. Incidentally, some of God’s attributes are doubled-up in the following list; *i.e.*, they are not all listed completely independent of each other. With that in mind, let’s begin by looking at God’s Omniscience, Omnipotence, and His Omnipresence.

1. **God is “Omniscient”** — that is, God knows everything about everything; there is absolutely nothing that He doesn’t know (be it past, present or future). Obviously, only an infinite eternal being is capable of knowing everything. The problem with finite man is that he thinks he is pretty smart and fairly knowledgeable, yet the truth is he doesn’t understand one percent of all that exists in his world, let alone all that exists in the entire universe (did you hear that?). If man would simply understand

his limitations and shortcomings, he would be a far wiser person, and not nearly as arrogant and self-centered as he is. Since God is infinite, He is not only aware of all things, He understands all things—He never learns anything new or gains new knowledge; all things are completely known to God—be they past, present or future. Furthermore, absolutely nothing surprises God, because NOTHING exists that God did not create or approve of, and that He did for a “reason”—absolutely nothing occurs or exists in the entire universe without a reason! Nothing you go through or experience in life is reasonless or senseless... so when you undergo trials and tribulations, you need to be cognizant of the fact that God either caused or permitted them for a reason (such things are not mere happenstance)... because human beings are fleshly creatures, they generally insist on understanding and approving of all they go through in life; but since that often does not happen, they become very frustrated with their lives. Remember, God created this world knowing it was going to be a fallen world; that was not at all a surprise to Him... He planned the end from the beginning!!! (cf. Is 14:24, 27; 37:26; 46:9-11)... so is it any wonder why this world is a diabolical wreck? Beloved, this world is a mess, and it is going to be an absolute disaster at the end of the age!!! Please keep in mind, this is all a part of God’s plan!!! He never intended it to be a wonderful little place for billions of beautiful people; we are all fallen creatures, thou some of us are now His children, the vast majority are children of the devil! Keep in mind, we will not experience God’s glory until we enter into the eternal state! Meanwhile, we must wrestle with our sinful nature and this ugly diabolical world!!! (cf. Rom 6:12; 7:18; 8:13; Gal 5:16-17; Eph 4:22-24). Obviously, that doesn’t sound fun, but that’s what God has chosen to subject us to!!! By the way, DEATH is the last thing we are going to experience in this life!!! Now though God knows the reason for everything we go through in life, we oftentimes do not, and that can be very frustrating to us as His children... hence the need to pray and seek God’s will, and accept that which we have been subjected to... remember, God has so willed everything we experience in life. So omniscience is the divine attribute of perfect knowledge (cf. Ps 33:13-15; 139:11-12; 147:4-5; Prov 15:3; Is 40:14; 46:10; Acts 15:18; 1 Jn 3:20; Heb 4: 13). It should be obvious to every believer, God knows everything because He willed everything into existence... that’s right, He not only created everything that exists... He willed everything that occurs in the universe; thus God not only understands everything... He controls everything. Read the following passages (cf. Ps 147:5; Ezek 11:5; Acts 15:18; Rom 11:33-36; Eph 1:11; Heb 4:13). Obviously, the foregoing is an extremely heavy subject.

2. **God is “Omnipotent”**—that is, God holds all power over everything that exists... nothing exists that does not fulfill His divine purpose and is under His control; nothing in existence is independent of God. All of God’s uses of divine power and vitality are consistent with His attributes (which are not at all arbitrary). The infinite power of God is set before us in Scripture in connection with His work of creation (Gen 1:1; Rom 1:20); His work of upholding the world (Heb 1:3); the redemption of mankind (Lk 1:35, 37; Eph 1:19); the working of miracles (Lk 9:43); the conversion of sinners (1 Cor 2:5; 2 Cor 4:7); and the complete accomplishment of the great purpose of the Kingdom (Mt 13: 31-32; 1

Pet 1:5; Mt 6:13; 1 Cor 15; Rev 19:6). Remember, when the virgin Mary was puzzled by the angel Gabriel's announcement to her that Jesus was going to be placed in her womb, He said to her, "For with God nothing will be impossible" (cf. Lk 1:37; Gen 17:1; Ps 115:3; Rom 11:36; Eph 1:11; Heb 1:3; Job 42:2); by the way, that emboldened word is emphatic in Greek. So here the angel was reminding Mary of God's omnipotence. By the way, God's omnipotence is declared in numerous passages (cf. Gen 17:1; Ex 15:11-12; Deut 3:24; Ps 62:11; 65:6; 147:5; Jer 32:17; Mt 6:13; 19:26; Eph 3:20; Rev 19:6).

3. **God is “Omnipresent”** — keep in mind, only an infinite Spirit is capable of omnipresence (*i.e.*, being present everywhere at all times). So omnipresence is an attribute of God alone, by which is meant that God is free from the laws of limitations of space (cf. Ps 139:7-10; Jer 23:23-24; Heb 1:3; Acts 17:27-28). Though God's creation involves space, mass and time, God completely transcends space, mass and time. The reality is, there is no limit whatsoever to God — all that exists in the universe is extremely limited in comparison to God. Remember, God does not possess limitations; He transcends all of them — He is an invisible Spirit who is everywhere present at all times... though the universe may be extremely big to human beings, it is nothing but a drop in the bucket to God; man's problem is, he is extremely finite, extremely small, and extremely unknowledgeable! Remember, that which is unseen is vastly more significant than that which is seen — the reality is, that which is seen is temporal and extremely limited, whereas that which is eternal is completely unlimited. Following are some verses you need to reflect upon (cf. Jn 4:24; Rom 1:20; Col 1:15ff; 1 Tim 1:17; Heb 11:27). Now, though fallen man may attempt to accomplish his own purposes in life, the truth is nothing can overtake the presence and power of God — if some act by man wasn't approved of by God, He would not let man accomplish what he desires (cf. Gen 11:1-9)... the reality is, nothing occurs in the created order that does not ultimately accomplish God's purposes. He is the omnipresent, almighty One. Since God is omnipresent, His Spirit is without end, and goes on and on ad infinitum — again, He occupies all that exists. Obviously, God is immense — there is no limitation to Him whatsoever; He is everywhere present at all times; there is no place in the entire universe where God is not. God fills space and time with His presence, sustains it, and gives it purpose and value. Omnipresence is a characteristic of the living God who is present at all times and in all places, creating and sustaining the space-time world and accomplishing His redemptive purposes in the fullness of time. That should be a logical construct of thought that is actually very comforting to a believer. Take the time to read these verses (cf. Ps 139:7-10; 1 Kg 8:27; Job 11:7-9; Is 66:1; Jer 23:23-24; Acts 7:48-49; 17:22-31).
4. **God is “the Creator”** — The very first chapter of the Bible tell us God is the Creator of the heavens and the earth (Gen 1:1), and the Creator of human beings (cf. Gen 1:27; 5:2; Is 45:12; Mal 2:10; Mk 10:6), and everything else (cf. Eph 3:9; Col 1:16; Rev 4:11)... according to Scripture God spoke all things into existence (cf. Ps 33:9; 148:5); "all things came into being by God, and apart from Him NOTHING came into being" (Jn 1:3); keep in mind, those emboldened words are emphatic in Greek. Of Christ it is said that "by Him all

things were created, both in the heavens and on earth... both visible and invisible... all things have been created by Him and for Him" (cf. Col 1:16; cf. 1 Cor 8:6); again, those emboldened words are **emphatic** in Greek. Though creation is the work of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, according to Scripture Christ is the preeminent agent of creation (cf. Jn 1:10; Col 1:16). So God is not only the source of everything that exists, He is the sovereign ruler of all things, be they seen or unseen. Interestingly enough, God created the world out of nothing (Heb 11:3); He simply spoke it all into existence (such thinking is completely unfathomable by finite man; how in the world does one speak something into existence?). Now with regard to human beings, God made man distinctly different from the animals He had created — man was a creature God made in His image, that He would visit and have fellowship with... and a creature who was given responsibilities, and the right to make certain choices... He was to be God's responsible representative and steward on the earth, and work out the Creator's will and fulfill His divine purposes — world dominion was to be granted to this new creature (cf. Ps 8:5-7). Again, "Man was created in God's image, according to God's likeness" (Gen 1:26); so man contains moral, ethical, and intellectual abilities... thus God placed humankind on earth as symbols of Himself to represent His reign. Now though man became a fallen creature, the good news is this — in spite of the fact that God's image is marred due to the fall, His image is being renewed (cf. Col 3:10; Eph 4:24) in those who are new creatures in Christ (2 Cor 5:17; Gal 6:15); and one day all of creation will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God (Rom 8:18-22). The reason God values human beings so much is that they possess His likeness — remember, we were made to reflect His majesty on earth, and have dominion over the earth. Keep in mind human beings have a "God consciousness," that animals do not have; so man possesses a "personality" and a "level of knowledge" that animals do not possess. Now where man actually differs from God is that He is a creature who is "extremely limited" and has a "body" (God does not); so man is also a very limited physical being. Yet in spite of his limitations, as redeemed individuals believers should see their bodies as God's temples (cf. 1 Cor 6:19). With the foregoing in mind, it's important to remember that God is eternal and transcendent, whereas nothing else in creation is.

5. **God is "Sovereign"** — the Bible teaches that God is king, the supreme ruler, and the lawgiver of the entire universe. As the psalmist said, "The Lord has established His His throne in heaven, and His kingdom rules over all" (Ps 103:19). As the most high, "God is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone He wishes" (cf. Dan 4:17, 25, 34; 5:21; 7:14). God's sovereignty is echoed in the traditional conclusion of the Lord's prayer: "For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever" (Mt 6:13). God is indeed "the only Ruler, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords" (cf. 1 Tim 6:15; Rev 19:16). The sovereignty of God expresses the very nature of God as all-powerful & omnipotent, able to accomplish His good pleasure, carry out His decreed will, and keep His promises. Several divine names reflect God's sovereignty — He is called "God Most High" (Gen 14:18f), "God almighty" (Gen 17:1; Ex 6:2); "Sovereign Lord"

(Gen 15:2; Deut 3:24), and “*Lord God Almighty*” (Rev 1:8). The reality is, “God works out everything in conformity with the purpose of HIS WILL” (Eph 1:11); His sovereignty is displayed in history in the work of creation, providence, and redemption. After His resurrection Christ claimed “*all authority in heaven and earth*” (Mt 28:18). The authority of Scripture is also an expression of the sovereignty of God since all Scripture is “God-breathed” (2 Tim 3:16) — that is why “*Scripture cannot be broken*” (cf. Jn 10:35) and why everything in it will be fulfilled and accomplished (cf. Mt 5:18; Lk 24:44). The reality is, God rules the destiny of men and nations (cf. Acts 14:1-17; 4:27-28); keep in mind, there is no such thing as happenstance anywhere in the entire universe; everything in existence is being ruled by God Himself. Look at a few more verses that reflect God’s sovereignty — “God chose us from the beginning through the sanctification of the Spirit and faith in the truth” (cf. 2 Th 2:13). “God chose us before the foundation of the world.... He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself... to the praise and glory of His grace” (cf. Eph 1:4-6). At the end of the age, “God will say to those whom He has blessed, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Mt 25:34). Said the Lord to the prophet Isaiah, “I have declared the end from the beginning.... My purposes will be established and I will accomplish all My good pleasure.... Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass. What I have planned, surely I will do it” (Is 46:9-11; also cf. Is 14:24; 25:1; 40:8; Ps 33:11; Prov 19:21). As the apostle Paul said: “God works all things after the council of His will” (Eph 1:11).

6. **God is “Absolute Reality”** — Obviously giving full definition to “absolute reality” is beyond human understanding, because we are finite creatures who are very limited in what we can understand. Yet with that being said, there are unique Christian perspectives on the nature of reality — though they may not answer every question we have, they can point us in a better direction. First of all, a common term used to reference reality is “truth,” and truth is that which corresponds with reality; it is used to describe things that actually are as opposed to those things that are not... so absolute reality is essentially the same thing as absolute truth. Keep in mind, if reality is not absolute, then there is literally nothing else to discuss. By the way, even those people who claim “everything is relative” must make an “absolute statement about the way all things are” — in other words, there is absolutely no escape from absolute reality and no denying some form of absolute truth. Remember, for someone to say that something is “not,” he must be able to support that with unequivocal truth, not simply give his own opinion. Yet juvenile opinions are now highly regarded by many people in the western world; in so doing they maintain that “their own opinion” is sufficient for them, that “that which is true to us may not be true to them, or what is true to them may not be true to us” — so absolute truth is not an absolute reality to them; it is simply their own opinion that they choose to embrace. So what this world has done is “remove absolute truth from it,” and claim that it cannot be proven; incidentally, this position is arrived at by “refusing to examine the fullness of issues” — instead they simply satisfy themselves with what they want to believe; yet in so doing “they often attack those who don’t agree with them!” (as if what they believe is “an absolute!”)

which is a complete contradiction. Obviously a person who chooses to ignore the foundations of absolute truth, will essentially operate outside of the bounds of logic, and simply satisfy himself with very remedial thinking. Interestingly enough, Scripture clearly espouses a belief in *reality* rather than *fiction* (Ps 119:163), and that we can in fact know the difference (cf. Prov 13:5; Eph 4:25). Remember, to simply ignore divine reality because you don't like it, doesn't make it untrue; what it requires is that one humbly study the issue, and not simply pass judgment on it without giving serious consideration to it. The reality is, some things "*are*" & some things "*are not*." Jesus said to His disciples, "I am the way, the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father but through Me" (cf. John 14:6); essentially that statement means "any contradictory claim cannot be true." This exclusivity is further supported by other passages (cf. Jn 3:18; 3:36), which clearly state that those who reject Christ cannot hope for salvation; the truth is, there is "no reality" in the idea of salvation apart from Christ. The fact that the Bible references truth is extremely useful; keep in mind, according to God's Word it is possible for a person to know the difference between *truth* and *falsehood* (cf. Zech 10:2), and between *fact* and *fiction* (cf. Rev 22:15). So Scripture gives us insight into several aspects of absolute reality — according to Scripture "moral truth exists," and anything opposed to it is "sin" (cf. Ps 11:7; 19:9; Jam 4:17). Remember, if you are sold out to fleshly thinking, you won't embrace divine truth because you will not humbly reveal it to your heart (*arrogance* is an absolute "no no" to God). You heard that right; only those with a humble heart will be absolutely convinced of divine truth — arrogance is the reason why there is so much corrupt thinking in our world. If some of you are challenging the truth of what God's Word teaches, in all likelihood you are placing a premium on fleshly thinking (which has no credibility whatsoever). According to Christianity, absolute reality is truth; i.e., it corresponds to what is real, and the most important aspects of truth are those given to us by God. So the greatest ultimate reality that every human being should humbly embrace is the absolute fact that "God exists!" To briefly expand upon the foregoing, God is absolute, pure and completely free from imperfection... He is self-existent (Ex 3:14), self-subsistent, ultimate reality (cf. Is 43:10-13; 45:5-7; 46:9-11), completely independent (Is 55:8-11), free from limitations, infinite (Ps 145:3), completely unchanging (cf. Heb 13:8; Ex 3:14; Ps 102:26-28; Is 41:4; 48:12; Mal 3:6; Rom 1:23; Heb 1:11-12; Jam 1:17), righteous and just (cf. Gen 18:25; Ex 34:6-7; Neh 9:32-33; Ps 145:17; Deut 32:4; Rom 9:1; 9:14-33), immutable, immortal, all knowing, imperishable (cf. Rom 1:23; 1 Tim 1:17), and "the eternal I am" (Ps 90:2; Rom 16:26).

7. **God is "Perfect"**— The word "*perfect*" literally means "without flaw." The truth is, God is perfect and flawless in every way. His works are perfect, and all His ways are just. He is a faithful God who does absolutely no wrong; thus He is upright and just (Deut 32:4). The truth is, God is the standard by which everything else will ultimately be measured. Beloved, it is not at all possible for God to be imperfect because that would mean another standard has found a flaw in Him. The problem with fallen man is that he often tries to elevate his own opinions above God's decrees, thereby implying that He is flawed. Psalm 18:30 says that all God does and says is perfect: "As for

God His way is perfect... the Lord's word is flawless; He shields all who take refuge in Him." Incidentally, God's perfection is seen in His character, His Word, and in his actions. When Scripture defines the nature of God, it uses the word "is" — 1 John 4:16 says that "God is love;" i.e., God is the fullness of what love means (1 Cor 13:4-8). Love is God's nature, and God perfectly defines love. In addition to the foregoing, "God is faithful, who has called you into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord" (cf. 1 Cor 1:9). So those whom God chose to redeem and justify "He keeps" — God will not lose one of His children — His faithfulness sustains us even when we are unfaithful to Him (cf. 2 Tim 2:13). The perfect faithfulness of God means that He remains the same regardless of circumstances or human behavior — If He said it, He will do it! (Is 46:9-11). If He declares it to be so, then it is so! And then there are the words of Jesus to His Father, "Sanctify My people in the truth; Thy word is truth" (Jn 17:17); incidentally, the emboldened word is emphatic in Greek. So Jesus equated God's written Word (the Bible) with absolute truth; remember, since God is perfect, every word He speaks is also perfect. Now though "God's actions" are sometimes puzzling to God's people, and are difficult to understand, and may even seem cruel to our understanding, they are not at all wrong — said Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face (Deut 34:10), "God does no wrong" (Num 20:12); i.e., He is absolutely moral. Though this same Moses was barred from the Promised Land because of His own behavior, he still saw God's perfection in all His actions. It is important to remember, "God is perfect; we are not." Though we as believers frequently stumble in life (which is frustrating for us), God's goal for our lives is still going to be accomplished — "God is going to conform us to the image of Christ" (Rom 8:29). Though we know we will never attain absolute perfection in this fallen world, nevertheless, God wants us to pursue it (Heb 12:14; 1 Pet 1:14-16). Again, it's like being a professional baseball player — though we will NEVER bat 1,000 in this life, we must do all we can to improve our batting average! In so doing we will work in harmony with what God desires of us; incidentally, we grow in our perfection as we keep our eyes on Christ, the author and perfecter of our faith, and seek to imitate Him in every choice we make in life (cf. Jn 15:4-5, 8; 16; Heb 12:2-3; Eph 5:1). Again, though we will never bat 1,000 in this life, we must all do everything we can to improve our batting average — if you are batting 200 now, within a year to need to raise it up to at least 220, and within ten years do your best to raise it up to 300... beloved, that must make sense to you.

8. **God is "Infinite and Eternal"** — Because God is Infinite & Eternal He is unlimited and completely unmeasurable by all finite creatures (be they angelic or human creatures), because all finite creatures are extremely limited in comparison with our eternal infinite God (the Creator of all things). Remember, God is not just a part of reality, He is reality... when there was no creation, there was only God... so God is the source of all that exists. Though "sin" entered into the created realm, it was made possible because God gave all of His creatures the freedom to choose, to trust, and to love God — He did not make His creatures sinners; they made themselves sinners. According to Scripture, God has no responsibility or complicity in His creatures

turning away from the God of creation and becoming their own self-centered god. So sin is not an essential part of His creation; it is simply a perversion of what is pure and absolutely good... again, there was nothing deficient in the created realm; every creature was made *absolutely perfect*; he simply chose to elevate himself and make himself an *autonomous creature* (i.e., a creature who would rule over his own life and be the master of his own life). Though sin occurs under God's sovereign power and purpose, and may seem to have been ordained, yet God in no sense is its author — the sin of Eve began with doubt concerning the rightness of God's command not to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; the sinful act resulted from the rationalized desire that was one of *direct willful disobedience to the expressed command of God* (cf. Gen 3) — remember Adam & Eve's sin resulted in an immediate sense of the shamefulness of nakedness and a consequent attempt to hide from God... and that sin is followed by the divine curse on the serpent, woman, and man, and by expulsion from fellowship with God in the garden. The penalty of death is inflicted on the human race which descends from Adam & Eve (cf. Gen 4-6). Ultimately, laws were designed to teach Israel the absoluteness of the holiness which is required of those who are called the people of Jehovah (cf. Lev 11-15; Deut 14:21). The reality is, sin roots in the deepest core of man's being & his heart; such is expressed throughout the Old Testament (cf. Jer 17:9; Gen 6:5; 1 Kg 11:9; Prov 6:14; Ecc 8:7; 9:3). Remember, Jesus came not to call the *righteous* (because there are none), but *sinners* to repentance (cf. Mt 9:13). Jesus' sharpest words are reserved for those who "trusted in themselves that they were righteous and viewed others with contempt" (cf. Lk 18:9; Mt 23:13-29). The self-righteous are most sinful because they not only transgress the law but make it void by their traditions (cf. Mt 15:1-20)... remember, evil which proceeds from the heart through the mouth defiles man (cf. Mt 15:18-20) — humility of heart is an absolute must before God. Keep in mind, we are finite creatures who can make very erroneous deductions; obviously this subject (in part) is one that transcends human thinking. Now since God is eternal, He is self-existent... whereas all other creatures have a beginning. God does not depend upon that which is created; that which is created depends upon God. So God is not limited by anything — He is free, self-determined, and not determined by anything other than Himself and His own sovereign purposes. Since God is eternal, His life never had a beginning, it has always been — He has no beginning, no period of growth, no old age, and no end. The Lord is simply King forever (cf. Ps 29:10; Ps 48:14). Though God is not limited by space and time, He created the world with space and time. As difficult as it is to fully understand the God of creation, history is the product of God's eternally wise planning and creative purpose. God fills space and time with His presence; He sustains it and gives it purpose and value. So God is the Lord of time and history... His acts are never merely arbitrary — as the Lord said to Isaiah, "My ways are not your ways, and My thoughts are not your thoughts; as high as the heavens are above the earth, so are My ways & My thoughts higher than yours" (cf. Is 55:8-9). So it should be obvious, as finite creatures we don't have the capacity to understand everything that goes on in this universe; as such, we must simply embrace divine truth as God so words it, and acknowledge His Lordship in life. In spite of

what some people believe, God is not indifferent to human activity and need; thus we can always count on Him as His children, being confident that His love will rule in our lives. The immutability of God's character means that *He will never violate His own integrity or let others down*. God's unshakeable nature and words provide the strongest foundation of faith; He is not a man that He should lie (Num 23:19) or change His mind (1 Sam 15:29). *The counsel of the Lord stands forever* (Ps 33:11).

9. **God is “the Bread of Life”** — One of the seven “*I am*” statements that Jesus used of Himself was this — *I am the bread of life, whoever comes to Me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in Me shall never thirst* (Jn 6:35); keep in mind, all of those emboldened words are **emphatic** in Greek. Bread is considered a staple food, because a person can survive a long time on only bread and water; bread is such a basic food item that it has been synonymous for food in general — we even use “*breaking bread together*” to indicate the sharing of a meal with someone. Bread also plays an integral part of the Jewish Passover meal — the Jews were to eat *unleavened bread* during the Passover feast and then for seven days following as a celebration of the exodus from Egypt. Finally, when the Jews were wandering in the desert for 40 years, God rained down “*bread from heaven*” to sustain the nation (Ex 16:4). All of this plays into the scene being described in John 6 when Jesus used the term “*bread of life*.” When Jesus was ministering in the Sea of Galilee, over 5,000 people followed Him “because they were seeing signs which He was performing on those who were sick.” His disciples wondered how the people could be fed — the disciple Andrew told Jesus that only one little boy had food with himself... and that consisted of five small loaves of bread and two fish; yet that wasn’t sufficient to feed everyone. So Jesus took the food and multiplied it so that He could feed the entire multitude, and such demonstrated His deity, because *only God can create* (cf. Jn 6:1-14). Again, all of this plays into the scene being described in John 6 when Jesus used the term “*bread of life*.” Obviously, the people who were fed by the miracle of Jesus, did not give careful attention to what Jesus was saying (they were simply enjoying the food)... so Jesus then said to them, “*Truly, truly I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man shall give to you, for on Him the Father, even God, has set His seal*” (Jn 6:26-27). The people told Jesus that God had given them manna during the desert wandering; yet Jesus responded to them saying, “*you need to ask for the true bread from heaven that gives life to the world*” (Jn 6:32-33). Jesus then startled them by saying, “*I am the bread of life; whoever comes to Me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in Me shall never thirst*” (Jn 6:35). By equating Himself with bread, Jesus is saying that “*He is essential for life, and that the life He was referring to is not physical life, but eternal life*” — remember, *physical bread perishes*, whereas *spiritual bread brings eternal life!* And eternal life only comes from *GOD!* It is an attribute that only God possesses. Coming to Jesus involves making a choice to *forsake the world and follow Him*... believing in Jesus means placing our faith in Him that He is who He says He is, and that He will do what He

says He will do, and that He's the only one who can. The truth is, God is the essence of all life... no life exists outside of God — **none whatsoever** (cf. Gen 1:20-30; Jn 5:26). Remember the words of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, “**Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied**” (Mt 5:6). When Jesus says those who come to Him will never hunger & thirst, He is saying He will satisfy our hunger and thirst to be made righteous in the sight of God. Though the vast majority of people seek to “earn their way to heaven,” that completely contradicts divine truth — it is by **grace alone** whereby we are saved; *it has absolutely nothing to do with merit on our part* (cf. Eph 2:4-5, 8-10; Rom 3:10-20, 28).

10. God is “Holy and Loving” — One of the most fundamental features of God’s being is expressed by the word “holy;” He is the incomparable God, “the Holy One” (cf. Is 40:25; Hab 3:3). The word “holy” in both Hebrew and Greek has the root meaning of “separateness” — God’s transcendence is separate from all creation... “He is exalted over all the nations,” therefore “holy is He” (Ps 99:2-3; 46:10). “He is the high and lofty One... whose name is holy and He lives in a high and holy place” (Is 57:15); incidentally the term holy is frequently used in Scripture to describe a separateness from sin. Now with the foregoing in mind, it’s important to remember that the most emphatic statement in the Bible is this: “Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory” (cf. Is 6:3; Rev 4:8). You’ll notice, Scripture didn’t say “Holy is the Lord”... or “Holy, Holy is the Lord”... but Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord, Remember, Jesus Himself frequently said, “Truly, Truly I say to you” (cf. Jn 1:51; 3:3; 3:5; 3:11; 5:19; 5:24; 5:25; 6:26; 6:32; 6:47; etc.); in so doing He was making very **emphatic statements**; He wasn’t just saying, “Truly I say to you; He was saying, “Truly, Truly I say to you;” thus He was being “redundant” in what He was saying; in so doing, He was giving very strong emphasis to what He was saying. Remember, by being “redundant” in what He was saying, Jesus was being extremely emphatic in what He was saying. Yet the word of God to Isaiah was the most emphatic statement in all of Scripture... the reality is, “GOD IS PERFECTLY HOLY!” i.e., He is different, distant and transcends the entire created order... as such God is indescribable; He is so perfect we cannot even fathom Him. Because God is holy & merciful He reaches down to take care of us, and meet every need in our lives. To expand upon the word holy, in Scripture it means separation from all that is common or unclean, and when it is applied to God Himself, it means He is completely pure and distinct from all others. In God, His holiness is a purity of being and nature, as well as His will and actions; He never ever does wrong because His nature is absolutely holy; read the following verses (cf. Ex 3:1-6; 1 Sam 2:2; Ps 99:1-9; Is 6:1-13; Jn 17:11; 1 Pet 1:16; 1 Jn 1:5; Rev 3:7; 4:1-11; 15:4). The truth is, God is morally spotless in character and action, upright, pure, and untainted with evil desires, motives, thoughts, words or acts. Since God is holy, He is the source and standard of all that is right. God is free from all evil, and loves all truth and goodness. As such, He values purity and detests impurity and inauthenticity. So God cannot approve of any evil... He takes no pleasure in evil (Ps 5:4), and cannot tolerate it (Hab 1:13)... since He abhors evil He cannot encourage sin in any way (cf. Jam 1:13-14). So holiness is actually

a changeless characteristic of God's eternal nature. Keep in mind, God always wills everything in accord with His nature... thus He wills good because He is good; and because He is holy, He is constantly repulsed by all that is evil. So the Holy Spirit is called HOLY not only because He shares the holiness of the divine trinity, but because the Spirit's distinctive function is to produce holy love in God's redeemed people. God desires to give of Himself for the well-being of those He loves, in spite of the fact that they are unlovely and undeserving (beloved, reflect upon that; that's why God's unmerited favor [i.e., His grace], is so critical for the believer to understand – because none of us as believers merit God's favor; grace is given to us in spite of the fact that we are not worthy! Remember, "God so loved the world (i.e., He cared so much about us) that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life!" (Jn 3:16). Think about it, "Here we are sinful diabolical wrecks who are children of the devil without an ounce of goodness, yet God sent His Son into the world to be crucified that He might forgive us and make us His children!" By the way, we still aren't wonderful glorious creatures... that won't occur until we enter into God's eternal state (i.e., heaven), and experience a complete transformation! With the foregoing in mind, love cares for the aged, the oppressed, the orphans, the poor, and everyone in need. Because God is a loving God He is "merciful"; and being merciful He withholds or modifies deserved judgment, and in "grace" He freely gives undeserved benefits to those whom He chooses — all of these moral characteristics flow from God's great love. In love God chose Israel (Deut 7:7), and predestined believing members of the Church to be adopted as sons through Jesus Christ (Eph 1:4-5). So love seeks good for the object loved... in God it is the perfection of holiness and all that implies. Remember, Scripture tells us "God is love" (cf. 1 Jn 4:8; 4:10; Jn 3:16), thus indicating the very nature of God, and that the love of God has been poured out into the believer's heart (cf. Rom 5:5)... hence closely related to love are goodness, mercy, long-suffering and grace. Said the psalmist David, "But You, O Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness" (Ps 86:15).

11. **God is a “God of Mercy, Love & Grace”** — In order to expand upon the foregoing, let's take a look at each of these elements again. God being merciful basically means that when we deserve punishment, He doesn't punish us, but in fact actually blesses us instead... so mercy is the withholding of a just condemnation. Throughout the Bible God gives numerous illustrations of His mercy. God was merciful to the wayward Solomon (1 Kg 11:13)... was merciful to Israel in captivity (cf. Ps 106:45; Neh 9:31)... and His mercy was illustrated every year on the Day of Atonement, when the high priest would enter the Holiest Place and sprinkle the blood of the sacrifice before the mercy seat (Lev 16:14). The reality is, God's mercy is rooted in His love for us (Ps 86:15; 1 Jn 4:8). As sinners we deserve punishment (Rom 3:23)... but since God loves us and is merciful, He sent His Son to die for our sins (Jn 3:16; also cf. Rom 9:15-18; Eph 2:4). The fullness of His mercy is seen in Matthew chap 27; Jesus is brutally beaten and murdered on our behalf (that is the ultimate act of God's mercy) — He received our just condemnation, and we received God's mercy. Because of His love for us, God wants us to be with Him, and

make Him the Lord of our lives (it should be obvious to every believer, God's mercy is required for that to take place; why's that? because we merit absolutely nothing but condemnation; we are not glorious people – though God will make us glorious people when we enter into the eternal state, that will not occur until life in this world is over). To our eternal benefit, mercy triumphs over judgment (Jam 2:13); again, none of us as fallen creatures merit God's mercy and grace. Incidentally, there is no separation between God's love and His mercy. Now regarding "God's love," there is a sense in which God loves everyone in the whole world (cf. Jn 3:16; 1 Jn 2:7; Rom 5:8), and this love is unconditional; it is based on the fact that God is a God of love (1 Jn 4:8, 16), as such He does not immediately punish people for their sins (Rom 3:23; 6:23; also Mt 5:45). So God's benevolence extends to everyone, not just to Christians – remember, "God causes the sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous" (Mt 5:45). Furthermore, the apostle Peter said, "The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise; instead He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance" (2 Pet 3:9). Obviously, God's love for everyone does not mean everyone will be saved (Mt 25:46); ultimately, God will not ignore sin, because He is also a God of righteousness and justice (2 Thes 1:6); to ignore God's merciful love and reject Christ who bought us with a price is to subject ourselves to God's wrath for eternity (cf. Rom 1:18; 2 Pet 2:1), not His love... the redemptive love of God that justifies sinners is not extended to everyone, only to those who have faith in Jesus Christ (cf. Rom 5:1; Jn 3:36; 14:21). Those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ are loved unconditionally forever; only Christians experience forgiveness based on God's eternal grace. Now the word translated "grace" in the New Testament comes from the Greek word "charis," which means "favor, blessing, or kindness." So grace is God choosing to bless us rather than curse us as our sin deserves; thus grace literally means "God's undeserved favor." As the apostle Paul said, "For by 'grace' are you saved, through faith, and not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not a result of works that no one should boast" (Eph 2:8-9); incidentally, those two emboldened words are emphatic in Greek. The only way any of us can enter into a relationship with God is because of His grace toward us; i.e. His complete undeserved favor. So grace gives a blessing that we don't deserve. In mercy, God chose to cancel our sin debt by sacrificing His perfect Son in our place (Titus 3:5; 2 Cor 5:21), but He goes even further then mercy and extends grace to His enemies (Rom 5:10). He offers us forgiveness (Heb 8:12; Eph 1:7), reconciliation (Col 1:19-20), abundant life (Jn 10:10), eternal treasure (Lk 12:33), His Holy Spirit (Lk 11:13), and a place in heaven with Him some day (Jn 3:16-18) when we accept His offer and place our faith in His sacrifice. So grace is God giving us His undeserved favor.

- 12. God is “Good”** — Jesus declared, "No one is good except God alone" (Lk.18:19); incidentally, that word "alone" is emphatic in Greek. It's interesting to note that fallen creatures like to think of themselves as actually being fairly good, so it is their innate sinfulness by which they arrive at such an erroneous conclusion; since fallen creatures are completely lacking in goodness (which is also antithetical to what they believe), they are completely unaware of the depth of their sinfulness. It's kind of amazing at

how the minds of men operate — they simply interpret things according to their fallen minds, in spite of the fact that reality is constantly arguing against their thinking; thus all they technically claim, is that though they are not perfect creatures, neither are they grossly imperfect creatures. The apostle John tells us that “God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all” (1 Jn 1:5); again, that word “light” is **emphatic** in Greek. To say that God is good means that God always acts in accord with what is right, true, and good; so Holiness, Righteousness & Goodness are all a part of God’s nature... He cannot be anything that lacks holiness, righteousness or goodness. The fact that God is good means that He has absolutely no evil in Him... His intentions and motivations are always good; He always does what is right, and the outcome of His plan is always good (cf. Gen 50:20). The Bible teaches that God’s goodness extends from His nature to everything that He does (Ps 119:68). “The Lord is good and His love endures forever; His faithfulness continues through all generations” (Ps 100:5). Remember, everything God made was originally “good” – “God saw all that He had made, and it was very good” (Gen 1:31; 1 Tim 4:4). God’s goodness is also reflected in the Law that He gave to Israel — the Law is holy, righteous, and good (Rom 7:12). God can only do what is good, because He is fully good. God’s goodness should lead us to being thankful: “Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; His love endures forever” (Ps 107:1; 1 Chron 16:34; Ps 118:1; Ps 136). Remember, “people love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil” (Jn 3:19). Ultimately, God’s goodness is seen in His plan to redeem us from sin; thus, the Gospel is “good news!” By the way, “It is the goodness of God that leads us to repentance” (Rom 2:4). So this good God invites us to seek Him and “taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in Him” (Ps 34:8). Said James, the brother of Jesus, “Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of Lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow” (Jam 1:17). The wonderful truth is, God never changes... there is no evil in Him... and not a single hint of darkness... He is the Father of lights; absolutely pure lights. God always acts according to His own character, which is intrinsically good. Remember, “every good and perfect gift is from God” (Jam 1:17); He not only is good, He is the source of all goodness. One of the most popular verses in the Bible is Romans 8:28 — “All things work together for good to those who love God, and are called according to His purpose.” Obviously, if God is able to make everything that happens to us work together for our good, then ultimately everything that happens to us is good (in spite of the fact that it may cause pain and great consternation in our hearts and minds)... the reality is, God is able to make everything we experience in life work for our good (even all the evil negatives we experience). Take the time and contemplate the following verses (cf. Ex 34:6-7; Ps 25:8-10; Ps 100:1-5; Rom 8:28-39; Jam 1:17).

- 13. God is “Truth”** — The first Christian theologian to attempt any systematic exposition of the concept of “truth” was the North Africa bishop Augustine (1500 hundred years ago back in the 5th century) — his aim was to refute skepticism. If man is incapable of grasping the truth about God, then morality and theology will not be possible. Man needs to understand that factual spiritual truth is as much truth as mathematic, scienc-

tific and historical truth; as such, all truth is intellectual truth. Interestingly enough, the Greek philosopher “**Plato**” went so far as to teach that *a knowledge of the truth automatically guarantees a moral life*. So the ancient Greek world during the time of Christ was believing that God exists (in spite of the fact that they didn’t really understand who He was); nevertheless they were embracing a moral life. Obviously, *God had prepared the world for His coming* — He had changed the languages of all the countries in the Mediterranean world to Greek 200-300 years prior to Christ entering into the world, so that they would all understand the message He and His disciples preached back then, and not see the existence of God as some strange concept that transcended human thinking. Remember, **Alexander the Great** had conquered the entire Middle East back in 331 BC, and he made the Greek language, education and culture the social norm throughout the empire... so pronounced was his work, the Jewish world embraced the Greek language, and in so doing translated the Hebrew Bible into Greek by seventy Jewish scholars — it became known as *the Septuagint*, and Jesus Himself quoted from it, because the Greek language ruled in the land of Israel. So God during the intertestamental period had prepared the Mediterranean world to listen to the divine truths preached by Jesus and His disciples. Though the relationship between God and truth (as it is defined in Scripture) differs from Greek philosophy, philosophical thinking at least opened the door of people’s minds as to *the integrity of divine thinking*; it was not at all as juvenile as modern day leftist thinking is (which essentially is a correlative of atheistic thinking). The wonder of Scripture is that *it gives definition to divine truth*... and when one humbles himself before the Lord, God opens his heart & mind to embrace divine truth — so God tells mankind the truth that man might *believe the truth* (cf. Dan 8:26; 10:1, 21; Ps 19:9; 119:160). The important thing for the believer to embrace is the fact that “**God is true**” and “**God’s Word is true**” — to change the discourse is to embrace *untruth*. Remember the words of Jesus to His disciples: “*I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me*” (Jn 14:6); conversely, just as Christ is the cause of life, so is He the cause and the source of all truth. That a sinner may be justified by faith is true, because Christ said, “*Let it be so.*” So, God’s word can be trusted because it is faithful and it is true — the genius of biblical teaching is that all truth is grounded in the faithful and true God. Jesus frequently said, “*Truly, Truly I say to you*” when sharing divine truth — the redundancy of the word “*truly*” actually made Jesus’ teaching “**extremely emphatic**” (cf. John 1:51; 3:3; 3:5; 3:11; 5:19; 5:224; 5:25; 6:26; 6:32; etc., etc., etc.). Jesus also stressed the authority and certainty of His message by saying, “*I tell you the truth*” (cf. Lk 9:27; 4:24; Jn 16:7). Now since God is true, so is His word (cf. Ps 119:160; Jn 17:17; 2 Sam 7:28; Ps 43:3; 119:142, 151). And since Scripture is the very world of truth, it should be handled extremely carefully (2 Tim 2:15). Whereas Satan and men lie (cf. Jn 8:44; Rom 1:25), Jesus is truth incarnate (cf. Jn 14:6; Jn 1:14, 17; Eph 4:21). Remember, the Holy Spirit indwells believers guiding them into all truth (cf. Jn 14:17; 15:26; 16:13; 1 Jn 5:6). Keep in mind, *truth is actuality, integrity, absolute & reality itself* — with that in mind, Scripture condemns *false prophets*, because what they say does not at all conform to reality. On the other hand, what *Scripture* teaches corres-

ponds with reality; with the foregoing in mind, it is important to believe truth (cf. 2 Thes 2:9) and speak truth (cf. Eph 4:15). Following are several other passages that speak of the absoluteness of God's truthfulness (cf. Ex 34:6; Num 23:19; Deut 32:4; Ps 25:10; 31:6; Is 65:16; Jer 10:8-11; Jn 14:6; 17:3; Rom 3:4; Titus 1:2; Heb 6:18; 1 Jn 5:20-21).

14. God is “Not Fully Understandable” — i.e., God does not operate and function as we might be inclined to think or believe He should; thus God is not fully understandable, comprehensible, fathomable, perceptible, or fully knowable. Since many people in the Christian world weren't taught exactly what Scripture teaches, some things can be very difficult for them to accept. The reality is, everything God subjects us to depends upon His own personal discretion; not on our discretion. Remember, God subjects us to numerous temptations, problems, trials, tribulations, physical problems, mental problems, spiritual deficiencies, and Satan's presence — though some of the foregoing may be a little problematic for believers to embrace, it is this issue that is so frustrating and difficult for believers to understand and except. Remember what the Lord said to the prophet Isaiah, “My ways are not your ways, and neither are My thoughts your thoughts... for as high as the heavens are above the earth, so are My ways and My thoughts higher than your ways and your thoughts” (Is 55:8-9). Obviously, this is a very difficult subject for believers to address, thus you need to give very careful consideration to what is being stated. The reality is, God doesn't respond to everything the way we think He should... oftentimes He responds in negatives ways that we have a very difficult time accepting. Said the wisest man whoever lived (King Solomon – cf. 1 Kg 3:12), “I the Preacher have been king over Israel in Jerusalem, and I set my mind to seek and explore by wisdom concerning all that has been done under heaven; it is a grievous task which God has given to the sons of men to be afflicted with. I have seen all the works that have been done under the sun, and behold, all is vanity and striving after wind” (Ecc 1:12-14; also cf. Ecc 1:17) — so here was Solomon thinking that He could be a happy person by acquiring enough knowledge... but he soon became disenchanted with learning as an end in itself, and he actually defined it as “an unhappy work” that God has given to mankind. Said the famous 20th century British journalist and satirist **Malcolm Muggeridge**: “Education, the great fraud of the ages, purposes to equip us to live... yet it simply serves to enlarge stupidity, conceit, and credulity.” So this thing called education isn't as grand & glorious as most people in the western world believe. Said King Solomon: “There is no lasting remembrance of the wise or the fool forever, since all that now is will be forgotten in the coming days. And how does the wise die? like the fool! So I hated life, for the work that had been done under the sun was grievous to me; because everything is futility and striving after wind...thus I hated all my labor which I had toiled under the sun” (Ecc 2:16-18). “Here is what I have seen to be good and fitting – to eat, drink, and enjoy oneself in all one's labor in which he toils under the sun during the few years of his life which God has given him – this is his reward” (Ecc 5:18). Conversely, “the day of one's death is better than the day of one's birth. It is better to go to a house of mourning than to go to a house of feasting... sorrow is better than laughter... the mind of the wise is the house of mourning, while

the mind of fools is the house of pleasure" (Ecc 7:1-4). "*In the day of prosperity be happy, but in the day of adversity consider – God has made the one as well as the other*" (Ecc 7:14). "*By the way, there is not a righteous man on earth who continually does good and who never sins*" (Ecc 7:20). "*The conclusion when all has been heard, is fear God and keep His commandments*" (Ecc 12:13). Obviously, those are very poignant statements. What is critically important to remember is this — *even as believers we are all fallen creatures*, and it is our fallenness that causes great consternation in our soul; nevertheless, we must learn to live with it and fight against it as God has decreed. With the foregoing in mind, give careful attention to the next four paragraphs.

To give application to what was just stated, every believer at times *struggles with his faith* (i.e., he struggles with believing divine reality), because it doesn't appear to mesh with what he experiences in life; keep in mind, even the most committed godly leaders down through the ages struggled with their faith at various points in life (that simply defines true born-again believers). Remember, *the very essence of faith is to believe in that which we cannot see* (cf. Heb 11:1); listen careful: the problem with physical beings is that *they tend to put faith in what they experience with their senses*; in other words, what they *experience* in life is of vital significance to them. Beloved, this is not at all uncommon for believers, and to their chagrin this is actually taught in many churches. Now since spiritual realities are not fully perceived or fully tangible (i.e., they are not things that are capable of being fully identified or fully understood), as believers we must learn to embrace those divine truths that transcend our senses. The problem is, when that which is tangible and visible overwhelms our minds, *doubts* can shroud divine truth, spiritual reality, and that which is invisible. Yet even with that in mind, it is important to remember that *God understands our inability to always exercise genuine faith*. To expand upon this thing called "*faith*," remember Scripture says "*we walk by faith, not by sight*" (2 Cor 5:7) — if God were a *visible God* that would be one thing, but God is an *invisible God*, thus He completely transcends the created realm... therefore we don't walk by sight, but by faith... and faith is simply a matter of believing God's self-revelation to us... *so faith essentially is a king of personal limited knowledge of God* — remember, we are finite creatures, whereas God is an infinite creature, thus we are extremely limited in our understanding of divine truth (which essentially is God Himself), yet there is a lot of divine truth that we can understand because God reveals it to the hearts & minds of those who humble themselves before Him (cf. Jn 17:17; Jam 4:6). As most of you may recall, a man came to Jesus and said to Him, "*I brought you my demon possessed son because your disciples were not able to remove it from him;*" to which Jesus responded, "*All things are possible to him who believes;*" yet the boy's father said, "*I do believe, help my unbelief*" (cf. Mk 9:14-24). It's important to note, Jesus did not rebuke the man, but actually healed the man's son in spite of the man's lack of faith, and honored his desire to grow in his faith. *It should be encouraging to remember that when we struggle with faith (which we all do) we are in good company*; faith is **not** just a simplistic little issue that some believers insist on making it; the truth is none of us as fallen creatures possess a perfect faith... none of us

walk on water; that's why we are called to "*grow in our faith*" (cf. 1 Pet 2:2; 2 Pet 1:2; 3:18; 1 Tim 6:12)... keep in mind, *God isn't angry with us because our faith is imperfect!* *God is committed to working in and through our lives until the day we enter into His glory in heaven* (that has been His plan in the lives of His people from the very beginning); meanwhile, He just keeps on working in our hearts and minds, knowing full-well how difficult life is for us as His children (cf. Phil 1:6; Heb 12:4-11; Jn 17:13-21; Rom 12:2; Eph 4:22-24; Phil 2:12-13; Titus 3:5; 1 Pet 1:14). The prophet *Elijah* also experienced just such a struggle — he had called down fire from heaven and killed over 400 false prophets (cf. 1 Kg 18:36-46), yet immediately following that work Elijah hid himself in a cave because a wicked woman hated him and wanted to kill him; so he gave into fear and doubt and became so depressed he actually *asked for death!* (cf. 1 King 19:2-5). The reality is, during times of stress and frustration, we can easily forget everything God has done for us and question the integrity of our faith and what we believe (that is not unusual; that is the norm for God's children when significant problems start to dominate all that goes on in their lives). Incidentally, several other prophets in the ancient world became very frustrated with what they were experiencing and actually wished that they had never been born (be it Job, Jeremiah & several other saints). Keep in mind, *there is nothing bad or unusual about Christians wrestling with doubt and disbelief* (that's all a part of what it means to be a believer); even Jesus' disciples had to find their way through this dark, discouraging reality... at the very moment when belief should have become fairly easy for God's disciples (when the risen Christ stood in front of them following the resurrection), "*some of them doubted!*" (Mt 28:17). It's important to remember, there comes a time in the lives of every believer when God subjects us to discipline, frustrations, diseases, and trials — and when that occurs, our faith suddenly turns cold, and we become frustrated and full of misunderstanding, and become weak to the point of being unable to get back on track (beloved, that is not at all uncommon for believers; every believer experiences it). What's important to remember is that *trials are of God, and contain God's good intentions... He subjects us to them to perfect and grow our faith, and accomplish His purposes in and through our lives;* With the foregoing in mind, it is important to remember that none of us as believers have a perfect faith or are magnificent creatures.

Now due to the fact God has subjected me to numerous difficulties and negatives in life (as He has many of you), He ultimately caused me to spend thousands of hours studying what His Word teaches, because what I had been taught growing up didn't fully correspond with some of what I was experiencing in life... the *negatives* I was experiencing actually caused me to question why I was struggling with this thing called "*faith*," and why I wasn't experiencing more *positives* in life, since that is what I was led to believe. The problem with the Christian world down through the ages is that most of it was not very knowledgeable about divine reality and how it functions — remember, the dynamic of the flesh is *feeling*, and the dynamic of the Spirit is *faith*... and those two constructs are radically different. The reality is, *our flesh is governed by our innate feelings* (not divine truth), and *our spiritual life is governed by faith and*

the Holy Spirit (i.e., believing & trusting God and what His Word teaches); so when we “feel frustrated or angry in life” that essentially is the resultant affect of our flesh (and that defines every believer; we are all creatures who have a sinful, fallen inner-core, so don’t change the discourse). The reality is, if our flesh doesn’t like something we are experiencing, it is going to express itself... so “feeling good” is not the foundation of faith; again, the foundation of faith is “believing and trusting God and divine truth.” Though we all want to feel good about everything we experience in life, that does not at all correspond with divine reality; numerous times in Scripture God’s servants and prophets struggled greatly with their faith because of the negatives they were experiencing. Though some negatives aren’t that difficult to accept, some negatives are... as such, they not only cause us to question why we are experiencing them, but cause us to plead with God to remove them from our lives; yet far more often than not, He does not immediately remove them — remember the words of Jesus to His disciples the night before He went to the cross, “These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world” (Jn 16:33; Acts 14:22; Heb 12:4-11); keep in mind, those emboldened words are emphatic in Greek. The purpose of Jesus’ discourse with His disciples was that they could have peace in spite of the fact they would be experiencing tribulations in life... and that peace would be found in the person of Christ, who has overcome the world... and with the coming of the Holy Spirit they would have new powers of endurance and new courage to face the foe. Now since we don’t see negatives as a “positive,” we oftentimes have a very difficult time accepting them; the truth is, our faith isn’t as grand and glorious as we had hoped; though it is a genuine faith, it is a faith that is lacking in depth; hence the need to grow our faith. It is important to remember that GOD doesn’t get angry with us, despise us, or abandon us... He actually sympathizes with our weaknesses, and understands our fallenness, and the fact that we are growing in our faith; i.e., we have not reached the epitome of our faith (though we’re enroot, we’re not there yet). As the author of Hebrews said, “We do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses... therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we might receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need” (cf. Heb 4:15-16); incidentally, that word “grace” is emphatic in Greek... and don’t forget, grace means experiencing God undeserved favor! Keep in mind, we NEVER merit God’s grace! Never! To somehow think that we do merit it, is to be completely duped in our understanding of God’s love and grace — with that in mind, don’t elevate yourself; instead, learn to accept and embrace reality as Scripture states it.

Now though we all struggle with “negatives” in life, we must learn to see them for what they really are, and accept them as such — God has placed them in our lives to grow our faith... to accomplish His purposes in and through our lives... and to make us the people He wants us to be; though it is a difficult road to travel, it is one we must learn to travel by believing in God’s sovereign control of our lives, in spite of the fact that we don’t fully understand what He is doing in our lives. Said David, “The Lord

will accomplish what concerns me... do not forsake the works of His hands" (cf. Ps 138:8; 139:13ff; 100:3; Phil 1:6; 1 Th 5:24). With that in mind, it should be very obvious, just because we may "feel frustrated or discouraged in life," doesn't mean we are men and women whom God is very displeased with; again, He sympathizes with our weaknesses. One of the premiere reasons God subjected me to numerous negatives in life, is that He might motivate me to study His Word and accomplish His purposes in and through my life; it's important to understand, God doesn't do things for no reason... everything He subjects us to He does for a reason (our lives are not just mere happenstance). Remember the words of the psalmist David: "Thou didst form my inward parts; Thou didst weave me in my mother's womb... I am fearfully and wonderfully made... Thine eyes have seen my unformed substance; and in Thy book they were all written, the days that were ordained for me, when as yet there was not one of them" (cf. Ps 139:13-16; Job 10:8; Ps 119:73; Is 44:24; Ecc 11:5); take a moment and give very careful consideration to what was just stated. Now examine the faith **Job** displayed during his trials, when his livestock was robbed,... when all his possessions were lost... and when his body became covered with boils — "ultimately he cursed the day he was born!" (cf. Job 3:1ff). Likewise, the prophet Jeremiah cursed the day he was born and said, "Why did I ever come forth from the womb to look on trouble and sorrow?"" (cf. Jer 20:14-18). So this thing called "faith" is not nearly as simplistic an issue as some churches teach — it is a matter of believing & obeying God, not a matter of experiencing glorious results in this life. So the question is, are you going to believe God and obey Him, in spite of the fact that your life may possess a lot of negatives? The premiere problem with fallen man including believers (remember, though we are saved creatures, we are still fallen creatures; i.e., we still possess our old fallen nature; God never removed it from our lives), so the premiere problem for us is that we want to be "happy" in life — incidentally, that word happy in English comes from the old norse word "hap"; from which we get our English words "happens" and "happy" — when pleasant things happen to us in life, they make us happy... conversely, when unpleasant things happen to us in life, they make us unhappy. So "happiness" is a correlative of what occurs in our lives — if it is a positive, it makes us happy, if it is a negative, it makes us unhappy. So without experiencing some positive, we won't be happy, because happiness is a derivative of what happens to us in life; it is not simply derived at by faith or desire. Now the issue of "joy" is altogether different than this thing called "happy" — joy is grounded in Christ alone, and has nothing at all to do with some physical thing that we might experience in life... the reality is, we can actually experience "joy" in the midst of sorrow, but not "happiness." Said Jesus to His disciples the night before He went to the cross — He was telling them that He is the Vine and they are the branches, and when they abide in Him they will bear much fruit, and experience His joy — Said Jesus: "These things I have spoken to you that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full" (cf. Jn 15:11). By the way, you'll notice the word "happy" is not used at all in the New Testament; but the word "joy" is used 58 times in the New Testament. Remember, "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, kindness, goodness, faithfulness and self-control" (cf. Gal 5:22-23)... .

and then there are the words of Jesus' brother James: "Consider it all joy when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance" (cf. Jam 1:2-3). Keep in mind, joy has nothing to do with circumstances; it is the work of God in the hearts & minds of men when they see reality for what it really is. Take the time to read the following verses (cf. Lk 2:10; Jn 16:20; 17:13; Acts 13:52; Rom 14:17; Heb 12:2; and 1 Jn 1:4).

Following is a common response by believers — Since God ultimately subjects all believers to a number of negatives, trials, and tribulations in life (incidentally, older people are subjected to far more negatives than younger people), it is not at all uncommon for adults to say things like this: "God, I'm hurting, why aren't you helping me? Since You know everything about me, why don't You help me? Since I cry out to You, why are You ignoring me? God, please help me! Lord, remember what You taught in the Sermon on the Mount — Ask and it shall be given to you... everyone who asks receives... what man is there among you, when his son shall ask him for a loaf, will give him a stone? Or he who shall ask for a fish, he won't give him a snake will he?" (Mt 6:7-10). Obviously there are numerous passages in Scripture that most believers embrace... yet few believers fully understand them (also cf. 1 Jn 3:22). And then there are the premiere words about God by the apostle John, "If we ask anything according to His will, He hears us" (Jn 5:14)... likewise, Jesus Himself said, "Whatever you ask in My name that I will do" (cf. Jn 14:13). Yet when life becomes exceedingly difficult for believers, the majority of them will often be occupied with the thinking that most believers embrace — "Lord, there is nothing You don't know about me, and since You know everything I am experiencing, why don't You help me? That is very disturbing to me. Obviously, You have a reason for remaining silent and not removing the problem from my life. Due to the fact my flesh is a very active presence in my life, I constantly experience some very difficult negatives in my life... and no matter what I do to completely overcome them, I don't. Obviously there is nothing You can't do... yet You frequently don't help me to overcome those negatives... when I cry out to You, why don't You help me?" Though no believer who ever existed fully understood the God of creation and life (which is simply not possible for finite creatures), there are significant things we can understand about God if we give careful consideration to them; one of them is this: "God is a God of options and oftentimes does not respond the way we think He should, or the way we want Him to" (cf. Is 55:8-9). It is also important to remember that "we walk by faith... not by sight" (cf. 2 Cor 5:7) — since God is not physically present or visibly present in our lives or in our world, we must walk by faith, not by sight; i.e., we must understand that faith is a derivative of divine persuasion... and is a solid confidence based on convincing evidence (cf. Rom 4:3; 4:18; 8:24; 10:17; 2 Cor 4:18; 5:7; Eph 2:8-9; Heb 11:1-3, 6, 7, 27; Jn 20:29; Ex 14:31; Rom 1:16-17; 5:1; 8:23; 1 Tim 6:12); it is not a physical reality that our human nature can embrace — that's why the Jews of Berea, who after listening to Paul preach the gospel message, "searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so" (Acts 17:11). Remember, the Bible defines faith as "the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen" (cf. Heb 11:1).

So we don't believe something because we want to believe it, we believe something because *there is solid reasons to believe it*... and true faith involves the need to study Scripture (Rom 10:17) — *when we humble ourselves before the Lord and read His Word, God will open our hearts and minds to understand and believe that which is true* (cf. Acts 16:14; 1 Th 1:5). Though at times God appears to be an absolute enigma to us (*i.e.*, an inscrutable mysterious reality), we can cry out to Him and ask Him “*to give us the grace to believe Him*;” remember, the word grace means “*undeserved favor*,” so it is not as if we as fallen creatures need to merit His goodness to experience it (that is simply not possible); *so the question is, can you accept the fact that God gives grace to those who simply humble themselves before Him?* (remember, we must not think more highly of ourselves than we ought; we must simply acknowledge who we really are). Let me expand a little more on the principle stated above, “*We walk by faith, not by sight*” (cf. 2 Cor 5:7); keep in mind, *walking by sight* means we will be letting “*our feelings*” strongly influence our walk. It is also important to remember, we can't know God like we know a human being, because He is an invisible Spirit, not a visible one... therefore, we can't experience God like we do a human being. Since walking by faith is not at all common for human beings, *we must “learn” to do so*. Again, we know God by faith; *i.e.*, by humbly believing in Him and what His word says... when we humble ourselves before Him, He will minister peace and joy to our hearts; keep in mind, peace and joy are not a by-product of our own doing. Now in order to counter the unpleasentries of life and grow in our faith, we must *worship* God at least once a week, *fellowship* with other believers several times a week, *study* God's Word every day, and *pray* to God every day; *i.e.*, share our heart with Him, and acknowledge what His Word says (cf. Acts 2:42).

15. God is “Immutable and Faithful” — *i.e.*, He never changes. Said the Lord to the prophet Malachi, “*O sons of Jacob, I the Lord do not change.... From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from My statutes, and have not kept them. Return to Me and I will return to you*” (Mal 3:6-7). Those are profound words — God is a continuing merciful God. Sadly, the history of Israel is not a record of ever increasing obedience; instead, it is a long sad story of recurring departure from God... “*Return*” is the key term the Hebrew prophets used for repentance, renewal, and restoration (cf. Is 55:11; Jer 4:1; Zeck 1:3). Though the Jewish world constantly turned away from God, God kept exhorting them to *return to Him*, and in so doing He would return to them — the reality is *God never changes*... who He is never changes... His attributes have never changed (they are the same from eternity past). His character never changes — He never gets “*better*” or “*worse*”... His plans do not change, and His promises do not change. This ought to be a source of incredible joy for believers... the wonderful news is, God is always dependable; never undependable — “*He is the same yesterday, today & forever*” (cf. Heb 13:8; 1:12). It is because the God who promised us eternal life is immutable that we may rest assured that *absolutely nothing will separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord* (Rom 8:35-39); by the way, that word “*nothing*” includes everything we experience in life — be it trouble, hardship, persecution, stumbling,

famine, nakedness, danger or sword... *though God will discipline us at various times, He will never ever abandon us!* Though that may be difficult for you to believe, that defines God. “*Know therefore that the LORD your God is GOD; that He is faithful, that He keeps His covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love Him and keep His commands*” (Deut 7:9). So God’s faithfulness cannot be understood apart from His immutability (*i.e.*, the fact that He never changes)... due to the fact that He is unchanging means *He can never be unfaithful*. God’s people need to know that faithfulness is an essential part of God’s Divine character; that is the basis of our confidence in Him (it certainly isn’t in us as fallen creatures!)... so we can trust Paul’s word that “*God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son*” (Rom 8:28-29). Though we don’t fully understand how He faithfully achieves His plan, that He does in spite of the fact that we suffer in life, that we hurt in life, and that we die – *the truth is, when we go through hard times, we know that God is nevertheless unchangingly, faithful, good, wise, and always with us*; so faithfully trusting in who God says He is is a great comfort. “*For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known*” (1 Cor 13:12). Beloved, though most of us as believers can get pretty angry in life when things become very frustrating, and even get angry with God, we must understand that *God knows the diabolical nature of our flesh, and its prominent presence in our lives* (cf. Gal 5:17)... the truth is, *God far transcends our flesh and its diabolical expressions* (cf. John 6:37, 39, 40; 7:24; 17:12; 18:9; Rom 8:28-31; 8:35-39). Beloved, if you will embrace divine truth as it is stated in Scripture, you will be embracing it the way God has stated it, and that will completely change your life; just because you have been embracing a relatively juvenile theology down through the years, doesn’t make it true, no matter what your church may have taught; it simply means you have been living by standards that do not fully coincide with the Lord’s self-revelation; remember, this is precisely what the ancient Jewish world did; they simply embraced a theology that was *unbiblical*, and Jesus told them that numerous times (incidentally, the Roman Catholic Church has essentially done the same thing; to their chagrin they have gone off base in a number of directions – why so many Christians [especially leaders & pastors] change the discourse is absolutely dumb-founded, because they not only reject what Scripture says, but what Jesus Himself said numerous times).

16. **God is “Merciful and Gracious”** – this thing called “*mercy*” (*eleos* in Greek) is the outward manifestation of *pity*; it assumes *need* on behalf of the person who receives it, and *resources* adequate to meet the need on behalf of the person who shows it – *it is often used of God in Scripture, who is rich in mercy* (cf. Eph 2:4), *and who has provided salvation for all men* (cf. Titus 3:5; Lk 1:72; Rom 15:9). *God is “merciful” to fallen creatures* who possess infirmity and fear Him (cf. Lk 1:50); keep in mind, that word *fear* literally means to *be in reverential awe of God*... it is the beginning of wisdom (cf. Ps 111:10), and distinguishes the people in whom God takes pleasure (cf. Ps 147:11). So those who

fear God and live in awe of Him, often pray boldly for mercy (Heb 4:16). Said the Lord to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion. So it does not depend on the man who wills, but on God who has mercy” (cf. Rom 9:15-16). Thus God is unfailingly merciful, forgiving & lovingly kind toward us. Stated the great 19th century British Preacher, Charles Spurgeon, “It is undeserved mercy (as all mercy must be)... there is nothing right on the sinners part that makes him deserving of mercy.” The reality is this: without the mercy of God, we would have no hope of heaven... because of our disobedient hearts, we are actually deserving of death; remember, “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God – the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (cf. Rom 3:23; 6:23). Because God is merciful, we don’t get what we deserve! Instead we get life through faith in Christ! Remember, mercy is the goodness of God confronting human suffering & guilt. By the way, grace (i.e., God’s unmerited favor) actually goes before mercy; because God is a God of grace, He is merciful (cf. 1 Tim 1:2; 2 Tim 1:2; Titus 1:4; 2 Jn 1:3). Said the psalmist David, “The Lord is gracious and merciful; slow to anger and great in lovingkindness” (Ps 145:8). Remember, mercy is not getting what we deserve (damnation), whereas grace is getting what we don’t deserve (eternal life). It is by grace that God imputes merit where none previously existed, and declares no debt to be where one had been before; so grace is not something we earn or lose — “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that is not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast” (cf. Eph 2:8-9). Keep in mind, God’s grace is also sovereign: “I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious” (Ex 33:19). Remember what Jesus said: “All that the Father has given Me shall come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out... And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing” (cf. Jn 6:37, 39; 18:9). While all humanity benefits from common grace (cf. Mt 5:45), only those who place their faith in Christ receive saving grace. This is what results in our sanctification and glorification, that we might live for Christ and enjoy Him for all eternity.

17. Aside from the foregoing, God is “Several Other Things” — God is Jehovah; i.e., He is an independent, self-complete being: He said: “I AM WHO I AM” (cf. Ex 3:13ff)... God is Jehovah-M’Kaddesh; this name means the God who sanctifies; since He is a God separate from all evil, He requires that the people who follow Him be cleansed from all evil (Lev 20:7-8)... God is Jehovah-jireh; i.e., He is the God who provides; He grants deliverance from sin, and eternal citizenship in His kingdom (Gen 22:9-14)... God is Jehovah-shalom; i.e., He is the God of peace; it is the product of fully being what we were created to be (Judg 6:16-24)... God is transcendent; i.e., He exists beyond and above the created universe (Ps 113:4-5)... God is Jehovah-rophe; the name literally means Jehovah heals; so God is the physical, moral, spiritual remedy for all people (Ex 15:22-26)... God is Jehovah-nissi; i.e., this name means God our banner; thus God gives us the victory through the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor 15:57; Ex 17:8-15)... God is just; i.e., He is fair and equitable in all things (Ps 75:1-7)... God is wise; i.e., He knows and acts with

perfect wisdom in all things, and always acts for our good (Prov 3:19-20)... God is our Comforter; i.e., Jesus called the Holy Spirit the “Comforter,” and the apostle Paul says that the Lord is “the God of all comfort” (2 Cor 1:3-4)... God is wrathful; i.e., unlike human anger, God’s wrath is never capricious, self-indulgent, or irritable; it is the right and necessary reaction to objective moral evil (Nah 1:2-8)... God is El-Shaddai; i.e., He is “God Almighty,” the God who is all-sufficient and all-bountiful, and the source of all blessings (Gen 49:22-26)... God is Father; i.e., the Creator of the universe cares for each one of us as if we were the only child He had (Rom 8:15-17; Mt 6:9)... God is the Church’s head; i.e., Jesus is the head of the Church; He gives the orders that the body lives by (Eph 1:22-23)... God is our Intercessor; i.e., He intercedes for us; He opens the doors for us to boldly ask God the Father for mercy; thus God is both the initiation and conclusion of true prayer (Heb 4:14-16)... God is Adonai; i.e., He is our “Master” or “Lord;” thus He has the right to reign as Lord of our lives (2 Sam 7:18-20)... God is Elohim; i.e., He is “Strength” & “Power, and is transcendent, mighty & strong. Elohim is the great Hebrew name of God, displaying His supreme power, sovereignty, and faithfulness in His covenant relationship with us (Gen 17:7-8). With all of the foregoing in mind, it is obvious this person called “GOD” is not a simplistic creature... instead, He is infinite, eternal, and completely transcends the minds of men. Though He has provided us with a “self-revelation,” even that in and of itself exceeds human thinking... yet it does provide us with a level of knowledge that is a great encouragement to our hearts.

CHRIST’S MESSAGES to the WORLD in the FIRST CENTURY

After God created man somewhere between 4,000 BC & 5,000 BC (cf. Genesis chapter 1), He went on to express divine truth to the world for about five thousand years (most specifically to Noah, Abraham, Moses, and the Jewish prophets that He had chosen to speak to His people down through the centuries)... and due to the fact that man did not fully identify with what He said to them, He sent His Son Jesus Christ into the world to completely identify man’s problem, and to redeem sinful man. So this particular chapter you are now about to read is a summation of the fullness of Christ’s (i.e., GOD’S) final message to the entire world in the first century. Though it is not simply one paragraph long, neither is it hundreds of paragraphs long... so let me encourage you to give very serious consideration to what Jesus said to the world two thousand years ago back in the 1st century... and Scripture makes it very clear that “this is God’s final message to mankind” – the reality is, either one believes it and spends eternity with God, or one does not believe it and ends up spending eternity in hell, and separated from God forever. If you do not embrace divine truth as God has stated it, you are letting your fallen sinful nature reject what God has stated. Because so many believers are ignorant regarding much of what Jesus had to say, and a little distraught over what they believe, I felt it was necessary to quote Jesus and give contextually understand as to what He had to say. The messages that Jesus conveyed to the world are contained in “the four gospels” (i.e., in Matthew,

Mark, Luke, and John); keep in mind, the four gospels essentially contain “the good news of Christ (i.e., GOD) to the world”— the word “gospel” appears over 125 times in the New Testament. Again, the gospel is simply a summation of God’s Word to mankind, and essentially is the joyous proclamation of God’s redemptive activity in Christ Jesus on behalf of humans enslaved to sin. Strictly speaking, there is only one Gospel — the four writings called “gospels” are really only variations of a single theme. As theologians have stated, “It is actually more accurate to speak of the “fourfold gospel” than the “four gospels themselves;” it’s important to remember, not one gospel differs regarding what God had to say; though some give greater expression to what Jesus had to say, none of them change the discourse in any way; therefore “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work” (2 Tim 3:16-17). Remember, the Lord Jesus only spent a little over three years in the ancient Jewish world speaking to His people... following His three year ministry, He then ascended into to heaven. “The fullness of the gospel that Jesus shared with the Jewish world during that three year period is to be preached throughout the entire world prior to the consummation of the age” (cf. Matt 24:14; Mark 13:10). Now as you read what Jesus had to say in the next thirteen pages, you’ll notice I quote what Jesus said from all four gospels... in so doing, I have emboldened some of the words that Jesus said that you might give them more attention (because they are very significant). I start each statement by listing the gospel verses on which Jesus’ words were written. Now before we launch into what Jesus had to say, it is important to remember that the four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke & John contain the words of Christ that GOD chose to have His Son say to the world (cf. Jn 5:36; 7:16; 8:26, 28, 38; 12:49; 14:10, 24) — did you hear that? Everything Jesus said to the Jewish world back in the 1st century, was what GOD THE FATHER told Him to say. Again, the four gospels are almost all we have that describes the moral life of Jesus Christ and what He said. Regarding the four individuals whom God chose to quote what Jesus had to say by writing the gospels, they are as follows —

1. Matthew was a Jewish tax collector; undoubtedly, he was well educated and knew how to read and write... he also knew arithmetic — keep in mind, being educated, and being able to read and write and have a full understanding of arithmetic was not at all common two thousand years ago. Education didn’t become a common practice in our world until the last few centuries; so the ancient world was not at all like our present world; incidentally, about half of the people in the ancient world were enslaved — slavery was extremely common in our world up until about 200 years ago... though many people were born into it, many people chose to become bondservants because life for them was very difficult and troubling; many people were seriously lacking financially and were not able to make ends meet, so they chose to become bondservants of someone who was fairly wealthy. It is also important to remember that the majority of people who were bondservants loved their masters and had great respect for them; now, though some slaves weren’t treated well, the vast majority were; therefore most slaves had great respect for

their masters, because their masters provided for all of their needs. So enslavement was not the negative many people in our world today think it was. Keep in mind, many slaves here in America actually fought with their master and for their master back in the civil war in the 1800's (very few of them fought against them); so many bondservants chose to remain with their masters after the civil war was over. Incidentally, not all slaves here in the U.S. back then were black, many of them were also white (though the majority here in America was black). By the way, the majority of bondservants in the ancient Roman Empire were white. It is also important to note that Scripture did not condemn this thing called slavery & being bondservants; it simply told bondservants and masters how to respond to each other; essentially, bondservants are to submit to those in authority over them, and masters are to treat their bondservants well. Take the time to read the following passages (cf. Eph 6:5-9; Col 3:22, 25; 4:1; 1 Tim 6:1-2; Titus 2:9-10; Heb 13:17; 1 Pet 2:18-21). Let's return again to what the Apostle Matthew had to say in his gospel account — he often stressed that Jesus Christ is the Messiah and came to fulfill the Old Testament prophecies; with that in mind, he wrote specifically to the Hebrew audience who was familiar with those prophesies, and one of his purposes was to show from Jesus' genealogy (and the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies) that He was the long expected Messiah.

2. **Mark** was actually much younger than the other writers. His mother was a prominent follower of Jesus Christ — The book of Acts tells us that her house in Jerusalem was used as a meeting place for other disciples (Acts 12:12). After the Resurrection when the Savior's message was beginning to be spread, Mark traveled with the Apostle Paul... and later on accompanied the Apostle Peter in Rome and stayed with him while he was in prison. Mark is known as Peter's interpreter, both in speech and in writing. As a fisherman from Galilee, Peter may not have spoken Greek fluently, so Mark interpreted for him. In his book, Mark wrote down the observations and memories of the Apostle Peter. Mark's book reflects Peter's interest in spreading the gospel among the Gentiles. With the foregoing in mind, Mark wrote for a Gentile audience, as is brought out by his not including things important to Jewish readers.
3. **Luke** is an interesting writer because he did not know Jesus Christ personally; he became a follower after the Lord's death when Paul taught him the gospel. Luke had been a highly educated physician, but he left that profession to travel with Paul in the Gentile world. He also had the opportunity to talk with many of the apostles as well as others who were eyewitnesses to special events or moments in the Lord Jesus's life. It's important to remember, that Luke is the only Gentile author of the New Testament, and as a historian, he states that it is his intent to write down an orderly account of the life of Christ based on the reports of those who were eyewitnesses...keep in mind, he specifically wrote for the benefit of Theophilus, a high ranked gentile (read Luke 1:3; Acts 1:1). In the first few verses of his book, Luke

says that he is going to write the things that eyewitness and other teachers of the gospel had to say about the Savior; incidentally, Luke often refers to Christ as the “Son of Man,” thus emphasizing His humanity. It is also believed that Luke probably got his information about Jesus’ birth from Mary, the mother of Jesus. It’s also important to remember that most scholars believe that Luke wrote the book of Acts as well (*i.e.*, the Acts of the Apostles); incidentally, nearly everything else that was written in the New Testament (beyond the gospels) are letters or epistles; and the Apostle Paul wrote the vast majority of them... yet there were several letters written by James, Peter, John, and Jude.

4. **John** served as one of the Apostles, like Matthew did. John’s book was probably written last, as John seems to have already read the other Gospels before he wrote his own book; in so doing, he writes about things the other writers did not include. About 90 percent of the information in the book of John is not in the other three Gospels. John essentially was writing to members of the Church, who already knew something of the Lord — John emphasized Jesus’ divine nature as the “Son of God.” Furthermore, the gospel of John emphasizes the deity of Christ, as is seen in his use of such phrases as “the Word was God” (Jn 1:1), “the Savior of the World” (Jn 4:42), the “Son of God” (which he used repeatedly), and “Lord & God” (Jn 20:28). Thus, in having four distinct and yet equally accurate accounts of Christ, different aspects of His person and ministry are revealed in the four gospels.

Now as we launch into the teachings of Jesus, you’ll notice I first identify the verses that are being cited (each of them are **emboldened**)... due to the fact that Matthew, Mark and Luke often quote various aspects of the same teaching, I identify nearly all of those passages. You’ll notice that the gospel of John is seldom quoted along with Matthew, Mark and Luke. Once I conclude what Matthew, Mark & Luke quote, I then go on to quote what John had to say... so keep that in mind as you read the following verses —

Matt 3:11, 13, 16, 17; Matt 4:1-11; Mark 1:4, 8; Luke 3:16; 4:1-13 — When Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist, the Spirit of God descended from Heaven and entered into Him, and a voice from God in Heaven said, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased... though John baptized you with water, Jesus will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.” Following His baptism, Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the Devil, and after He had fasted for 40 days, He then became hungry... and the Tempter (*i.e.*, the Devil) then came and did all he could to deceive Him... and Jesus responded to him with the following three statements:

1. You shall not live on **bread alone**, but on **every word** that proceeds out of the mouth of God.
2. You shall not put the Lord your God to a **test**.
3. You shall worship the **Lord your God**, and serve **Him only**.

Matt 3:2; 4:17; Mark 1:14-15 — Following the forty days that Jesus spent in the wilderness, He began preaching to the masses saying, “Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand” — it is only when sinful man humbly repents before the Lord, that he experiences forgiveness and salvation.

Matt 4:18-19; Mark 1:16-20 — Jesus said to Peter and his brother Andrew, when He was walking by the Sea of Galilee:” “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.”

Matt chapters 5-7; Luke 6:20-49 — When a large multitude followed Jesus to the Sea of Galilee, He went up on the mountain and proclaimed something known as “The Sermon on the Mount” (incidentally, that was the most significant sermon preached by Jesus while He was on earth). The first words Jesus spoke in this sermon were as follows:

- *Blessed are the poor in spirit.
- *Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.
- *Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth and be satisfied.
- *Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy..
- *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.
- *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God..
- *Blessed are those falsely cursed on account of Me, rejoice, because your reward in heaven is great! With all of the foregoing in mind, the word “blessed” is emboldened because it is emphatic in Greek (the language in which the entire New Testament was written).

Matt 5:13-14, 20; Mark 9:50; John 8:12; 12:35, 36, 46 — Jesus said to His disciples at the Sermon on the Mount, “You are the salt of the earth” and “the light of the world” — keep in mind, good salt seasons food, and genuine believers make others long for righteousness. Conversely, Christians (*i.e.*, followers of Christ) are “the light of the world;” though Jesus is the light, His children reflect the light as they shine for Him — just as the moon reflects the glory of the sun. Said Jesus, ‘Unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of Heaven.’ External righteousness without internal reality will not gain entrance into God’s eternal kingdom. The only righteousness God will accept is the imputed righteousness He gives to those who accept Jesus as their Savior (cf. 2 Cor 5:21). Interestingly enough, where there is true faith there is practical righteousness; all genuine believers display a practical degree of righteousness, because genuine faith affects a change in one’s heart.

Matt 5:43-48 — As Jesus continued to preach in the Sermon on the Mount, He said, “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor, and hate your enemy. But I say to you, Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you... for God causes the Sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends Rain on the righteous and the unrighteousness... you are to be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Matt 6:5-6, 9-13; Luke 11:1-4 — Jesus went on to say, “When you pray, do not pray so as to be seen by others (as the hypocrites do)... instead go into your inner room and shut the door.” When you pray then do so as follows: “Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.”

Matt 6:14-15; Mark 11:25ff — Furthermore, “If you forgive men for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you... but if you do not forgive others, your Father will not forgive you.”

Matt 6:19-21 — Said Jesus, “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon the earth... but lay up for yourself treasures in heaven... for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”

Matt 6:24; Luke 16:13 — Said Jesus, “No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon (i.e., money).”

Matt 6:25-34; Luke 12:22-31 — Said Jesus, “Do not be anxious for your life as to what you shall wear.... Look at the birds of the air — they do not sow, nor do they reap... yet God feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they?.... All these things the Gentiles eagerly seek... but your heavenly Father knows you need all these things. So seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. Therefore, do not be anxious for tomorrow, for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”

Matt 7:1-5; Luke 6:37ff — Jesus then went on to say, “Do not judge lest you be judged. For in the way you judge, you will be judged.... why do you look at the speck in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye?.... So take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye.”

Matt 7:6 — Jesus continued to preach, saying, “Do not give what is Holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine, less they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.”

Matt 7:21-27; Luke 31:25ff — Said Jesus as He brought the Sermon on the Mount to a close, “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of Heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in Heaven. Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and cast out demons in Your name, and perform miracles in Your name?’ Then I will declare to them, “I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness” (by the way, all sin is lawlessness; it simply

functions in its own way – cf. 1 Jn 3:4 – life is not about us and our own will, it is about Christ and His will). In conclusion Jesus said, “Those who listen to what I say will build their house upon the **Rock**... and those who do not act upon what I say, will build their house upon the **Sand**... and when the rain and the flood comes, their house will fall.” *So either we build upon the Rock, or we shall suffer loss.* Keep in mind, to build upon a rock means one’s life has a *solid foundation*, and when it is battered by rain and winds it will not fall.

Matt 9:36-38; Mark 6:34; Luke 10:2 — When Jesus saw the multitudes, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and downcast like sheep without a shepherd. He then said to His disciples, “*The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest.*”

Matt 10:16, 22, 24, 28, 32, 33, 38; Luke 10:1-16 — Said Jesus Christ to His disciples: “*Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves.... you will be hated by all on account of My name.... A disciple is not above his teacher....* do not fear those who kill the body, but are unable to kill the soul; instead fear Him (God) who is able to destroy both the soul and the body in hell.... *Everyone therefore who shall confess Me before men, I will confess him before My Father who is in Heaven... But whoever denies Me before men, I will deny him before My Father who is in heaven.... He who does not take up His cross and follow Me, is not worthy of Me.*”

Matt 11:28-30; 12:30 — Said Jesus to the Jewish world: “Come to Me, all you who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. *Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you shall find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and My load is light.*” Later on Jesus said, “*He who is not with Me is against Me.*”

Matt 13:10-15 — When the disciples asked Jesus *why He spoke in parables* to many in the Jewish world, He said to them: “*To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted...* I speak to them in parables, because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand... *The reality is, they have closed their eyes, lest they should see with their eyes,* and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart and return to Me, and I should heal them.”

Matt 16:24-27 — Jesus said to His disciples: “*If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself* (i.e., *his own innate desires*), *and take up his cross and follow Me.* For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it, but *whoever losses his life for My sake shall find it.* *For what will a man profit, if he gains the whole world, and loses his soul?* Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? *The Son of Man (Christ) is going to return in glory and recompense every man according to His deeds.*”

Matt 18:1-4; Mark 9:33-37; Luke 9:46-48 — Later in His ministry, Jesus' disciples said to Him, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” At that point, Jesus called a child to Himself and set him before them and said, “Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children (i.e., like a humble child), you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven — whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”

Matt 18:21-22; Luke 17:4 — Said Peter to Jesus, “How often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?” And Jesus responded, “I do not say up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven” (i.e., an endless number of times).

Matt 19:16, 23-26; Mark 10:17-30; Luke 18:18-30 — A rich young ruler came to Jesus and said to Him, “What good thing shall I do that I may obtain eternal life?” And Jesus said, “If you wish to be complete, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor, and come and follow Me.” When the young man heard that, he went away grieved, for he owned a lot of property... and Jesus said to His disciples, “Truly I say to you, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven... it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of the needle, then for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.” When His disciples heard this they said, “Then who can be saved?” To which Jesus responded, “With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible” (it should be obvious, salvation is not some work of man; if that were the case, none of us would be saved!).

Matt 20:26-28; Mark 9:35; Luke 22:26 — Said Jesus to His disciples: “Whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and give His life a ransom for many.”

Matt 21:12-13; Mark 11:15-18; Luke 19:45-47 — When Jesus entered the Temple in Jerusalem toward the end of His ministry, “He cast out all those who were buying and selling in the Temple and overturned the tables of the moneychangers and the seats of those who were selling doves. And He said to them, “It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer, but you are making it a robbers den.”

Matt 21:22 — Said Jesus to His disciples, “Whatever you ask for in prayer, believe and you shall receive!”

Matt 22:33-40; Mark 12:28-31; Luke 10:25-37 — When a multitude of Jews heard what Jesus was saying, they were astonished at His teaching... when the Pharisees heard that Jesus had put the Sadducees to silence, they decided to question Jesus with these words: “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” To which Jesus said, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind... the second is like it, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments depend the whole law and the prophets.”

Matt 23:37-39; Luke 13:34-35 — Said Jesus near the end of His ministry, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling. Behold, your house is being left to you desolate! For I say to you, from now on you shall not see Me until you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!’”

Matt 24:3-46 — When Jesus’ disciples asked Him, “What the sign will be regarding the end of the age?” Jesus responded saying, “Nation will rise against nation... there will be famines and earth-quakes... many of you will be killed and be hated by all nations on account of My name. And at that time many will fall away and hate one another... and many false prophets will arise and will mislead many... and most people’s love will grow cold.... The gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in the entire world, and then the end shall come.... Then those in Judea will flee to the mountains.... Then there will be great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world, nor ever shall. And unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days shall be cut short.... Though false Christs and false Prophets will arise, and show great signs and wonders (so as to even mislead the elect).... yet God will darken the Sun, the Moon, and the Stars... and the entire world will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with Power and Great Glory. And He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together His elect.... now of that day and hour no one knows but the Father alone.... blessed are the slaves whom the Lord finds doing when He comes.”

Matt 25:31-46 — “Now when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne... and all the nations will be gathered before Him... and He will put the Sheep (i.e., true believers) on His right, and the Goats (i.e., non-believers) on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right, “Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world... I was hungry and you gave Me something to eat (etc.)...then the righteous will answer Him, saying, “When did we see You hungry and feed You?”... and the King will answer them saying, “To the extent you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, you did it to Me”... thus He will say to those on His left, “Depart from Me into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the Devil and his Angels; for I was hungry and you gave Me nothing to eat”.... And they will respond to Him saying, “When did we see You hungry and not feed You”... And Jesus will respond to them saying, “In as much as you did not feed the least of these, you did not do it to Me! And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

Matt 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:17-20 — When Jesus and His disciples gathered together in the Upper Room the night before Jesus was crucified, He broke bread and gave it to His disciples, and said to them, “Take, eat, this is My body”... then when He had taken a cup into His possession, He told His disciples, “Drink from it all

of you, for this is My blood of the covenant, which was poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.”

Matt 26:30-32; 28:7, 16-20; Mark 16:15ff; Luke 24:44-53 — After singing a hymn with His disciples in the Upper Room the night before He went to the cross, Jesus and His disciples went out to the Mount of Olives, and Jesus said to them, “You shall all fall away because of Me this night... but after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee.” Now after Jesus was raised from the dead, He went to Galilee to meet his disciples... and when He met with them He said, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth – Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you... Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Jesus then taught His disciples what Scripture says and promised to send the Holy Spirit to them... and then Jesus ascended into heaven.

Matt 26:1-4; John 11:47-53; 12:37-50; 18:12, 28ff; 19:1-7, 15-18 — And it came about when Jesus had finished all the foregoing words, He said to His disciples, “You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man is to be delivered up for crucifixion.” Now it was at this point that “the Jewish chief priests and the elders of the Jewish world gathered together in the court of the high priest (Caiaphas)... and they plotted together to seize Jesus... and kill Him. So from that day on they planned to kill Jesus... Though Jesus had performed many signs before the Jewish world, many of them did not believe in Him... yet many did believe, including several rulers”.... and Jesus said to the masses, “I have come as light into the world, that everyone who believes in Me will not remain in darkness.... He who rejects Me, and does not receive My sayings ... the words I have spoken is what will judge him on the last day. I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me commandment, what to say and what to speak. And I know that His commandment is eternal life.”

Now the night before Jesus went to the cross, “the Jews arrested Jesus and bound Him,” and after meeting with several Jewish leaders, and the Roman governor of Judea (Pontius Pilate)... the Jewish people ultimately hollered out, “Away with Him! Away with Him! Crucify Him!” in spite of the fact that Pilate said, “I find no guilt in Him!” Yet the people hollered out, “Crucify, Crucify!” To which Pilate said, “Take Him yourselves, and crucify Him, for I find no guilt in Him!” Nevertheless, “Pilate still took Jesus & scourged Him, and placed a crown of thorns on His head;” yet Pilate told them, “I find no guilt in Him.” Following the dialogue, Jesus was taken up to Golgotha (the Hebrew name for the place where Jesus ended up being crucified). You’ll notice in the passages that follow, they were essentially taken from the Gospel of John; whereas Mark & Luke often quoted much of what Matthew had stated, John was more independent in what he just stated.

John 3:3-19, 36 — From this point on we’ll be quoting what the Apostle John wrote (starting at the very beginning of his Gospel). Said Jesus to a Pharisee named Nicodemus: “Truly, truly I say to you, unless one is born again, He cannot see the kingdom of God”...

to which Nicodemus said, “How can a man be born when he is old? He can’t enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born, can he?” Jesus responded, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, He cannot enter the kingdom of God whoever believes in the Son of Man will have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.... He who believes in Him is not judged... but He who does not believe in Him is judged. This is the judgment, that the light has come into the world and men loved the darkness rather than the light, for their deeds were evil.... He who believes in the Son has eternal life, but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”

John 4:7-14 — Said Jesus to a Samaritan woman, who had come out into the outskirts of town to get some water: “Everyone who drinks of this water shall thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst... the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life” (keep in mind, a well springs within the believer to continually refresh his thirst).

John 4:23-24, 39 — Said Jesus to the Samaritan woman, “The hour has come when true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth — God is spirit and those worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” After hearing what Jesus had to say, “Many of the Samaritans that He spoke to believed in Him.”

John 5:9, 16-30, 39, 46, 47 — When Jesus healed a man on the Sabbath, “the Jews persecuted Jesus for doing so,” but Jesus answered them saying: “My Father has been working ceaselessly since Adam’s fall, and He is still working”... for this reason the Jews were seeking to kill Him, not only because He broke the Sabbath, but because He called GOD His own Father (thus making Himself equal with God). Jesus responded to them saying, “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing for just as the Father raises the dead, and gives them life, the Son also gives life to those whom He wishes.... He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him. Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment you search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life, yet it is this that bears witness of Me.... If you believe Moses, you would believe Me, for He wrote of Me; therefore, if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?”

John 6:35-40, 47, 56, 63 — Said Jesus to the Jewish world, “I am the bread of life, he who comes to Me shall not hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.... All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me... and of all those He has given Me, I lose nothing... such people will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise them up on the last day.... Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life — I am the bread of life, the living bread that comes

down from heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is My physical flesh.... unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves.... My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me and I in Him.... It is the Spirit who gives life (one's flesh profits nothing)... the words I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.”

John 8:12, 24, 28-32 — Said Jesus to numerous Pharisees and a multitude of Jews, “I am the light of the world, he who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.... you shall die in your sins, unless you believe that I am He.... I speak that which the Father taught Me... I always do what is pleasing to Him.... If you abide in My word, then you are truly My disciples; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

John 8:43-47 — Jesus went on to say to the Pharisees, “You do not understand what I am saying, because you are of your father the Devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him; the fact is, he is a liar and the father of lies. But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me.... he who is of God hears the words of God, but you are not of God.”

John 10:1-11 — Jesus said in a parable, “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter by the door into the fold of the sheep, and instead claims another way, is a thief and a robber... But he who enters by the door is a shepherd of the sheep.... and the sheep follow Him because they know His voice; a stranger they simply will not follow”.... said Jesus, “I am the door of the sheep... if anyone enters through Me, he shall be saved.... I am the good shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep.”

John 10:27-38 — When the Feast of Dedication took place in Jerusalem, the Jews questioned Jesus as to who He really was, and He responded to them saying, “You do not believe who I am because you are not of My sheep. My sheep hear My voice, and they follow Me, and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of My hand. My Father has given them to Me, and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father’s hand — I and the Father are one!” At that point several Jews took up stones to stone Him... and Jesus said, “I showed you many good works from My Father; for which of them are you stoning me?” The Jews answered saying, “For a good work we do not stone you, but for blasphemy and making yourself out to be God.” And Jesus answered, “Has it not been written in your law, ‘I said you are gods’? Now if He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), do you say of Him, whom the Father sanctified and set into the world, ‘You are blaspheming,’ because I said, ‘I am the Son of God?’ If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me, but if I do them, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father.”

John 13:1-17 — When Jesus and His disciples gathered together before the **Feast of Passover** (the night before Jesus went to the cross), Jesus washed their feet because no one else had done that for them... and Jesus said to them, “If I the Lord and the Teacher washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. I have given you an example to follow.... Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master. If you know these things you are blessed if you do them.” I find it surprising that few believers love and care for others as God so states; perhaps those who are not loving & caring are simply not true born-again believers... on the other hand, those who are loving & caring demonstrate that they truly are born-again believers (cf. Gal 5:22-24).

John 13:33-35 — As the disciples gathered together with Jesus in the **Upper Room** the night before Jesus was crucified, Jesus became **troubled in spirit** and testified saying, “Little children, I am with you just a little while longer... where I am going, you cannot come. A new commandment I give to you, that you **love one another**, even as I have loved you; by this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another.”

John 14:1-15 — Prior to His being crucified, Jesus said to His disciples, “Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many dwelling places, if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you... the day will come when I will receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also”.... Said the disciple **Thomas** to Jesus, “Lord, we do not know where you are going, so how do we know the way?” And Jesus said, “I am the way the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father but through Me. If you know Me, you know My Father.... He who has seen Me has seen the Father... I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me... believe what I have stated, or at least believe on account of the works themselves. Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do shall he do also... and whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son... if you love Me, you will keep My commandments.”

John 14:16-18, 26-27 — In the Upper Room the night before Jesus went to the cross, He continued to tell them things they did not know — He told His disciples that the Father was going to give them **another Helper** (i.e., the Holy Spirit), that He may be with you forever — that is **the Spirit of truth**... and He shall abide in you. I will not leave you as orphans... the Holy Spirit will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you... My peace I give to you... let not your heart be troubled.”

John 15:1-8 — Said Jesus to His disciples the night before He went to the cross, “I am the true vine, and My Father is the Vinedresser... He prunes every branch in the believers life that hinders him from bearing fruit” (cf. Heb 12:3-11).... “Therefore, abide in Me (and I in you), as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the Vine... I am the Vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in Him, he bears much fruit.... if you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be

done for you. By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.”

John 16:28-33 — Jesus’ closing words to His disciples the night before He went to the cross were these: “I came forth from the Father, and have come into the world; I am leaving the world again, and going to the Father... the hour is coming for you to be scattered, each one to his own home.... these things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulations (i.e., affliction and distress), but take courage, I have overcome the world,” therefore you can be assured that you are on the winning side! Beloved, that’s a given!

John 17:1, 4, 9-24 — These things Jesus spoke, and lifting His eyes to heaven, He said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify Thy Son, that the Son may glorify Thee.... I glorified Thee on earth, by accomplishing the work Thou gavest Me to do.... I now ask on behalf of the disciples Thou gavest Me... I am no longer in the world, but they themselves are. Holy Father, keep them in Thy name... while I was with them, I kept them in Thy name, and guarded them.... I do not ask Thee to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one... sanctify them in the truth; Thy word if truth. Just as Thou didst send Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.... I do not ask in behalf of those alone, but for all of those who believe in Me through their word, that they may all be one (even as We are one), that they may also be in us.... The glory which Thou hast given Me I have given to them; that they may be one, just as we are one... that they may be perfected in unity, that the world may know that Thou didn’t send Me, and didst love them, even as Thou didn’t love Me... Father, I desire that they also be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory which Thou hast given Me; for Thou didst love Me before the foundation of the world.”

John 18:1, 12, 19, 20, 33-38 — When Judas betrayed Jesus, the Jews arrested Jesus, and the high priest questioned Jesus about his teaching. Jesus answered him saying, “I have spoke openly to the world... and spoke nothing in secret”.... Pontius Pilate, a Roman governor of Judea, questioned Jesus saying, “Are you the king of the Jews?” And Jesus responded, “My kingdom is not of this world... I have come into the world to bear witness to the truth.” Ultimately, Pilate concluded, “I find no guilt in Him.” Regardless of what Pontius Pilate had said, the Hebrew people cried out, “Away with Him! Crucify Him! We have no king but Caesar!” So Pilate then delivered Jesus to them to be crucified (obviously, he wanted the Jewish people to continue liking him and supporting him, so he caved in to what they were asking for).

John 20:19-29; also Acts 1:8-13; 2:1-4, 14ff, 42 — Following His resurrection, Jesus came and stood in the midst of His disciples who had gathered together in Jerusalem, and said to them, “Peace be with you,” and He showed them His hands and His side. He then said to them again, “Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me I also send you”... Jesus then breathed on them and said to them, “**Receive the Holy Spirit.**” In-

cidentally, the disciple Thomas was not present when Jesus met with His disciples... though the disciples told Thomas that they had seen the Lord, to which he responded, “Unless I see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.” Eight days latter, Jesus entered into the presence of the disciples again, and Thomas was with them... Jesus then said to Thomas, “Reach here your finger, and see My hands... and put it into My side, and be not unbelieving.” And Thomas answered and said, “My Lord and my God!” And Jesus said, “Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are those who did not see, and yet believed.” The last words Jesus spoke to His disciples were these — “You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.” And after He said these things He was lifted up into heaven while they were looking on... and two angelic men told them, “This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will one day come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.” The disciples then returned to Jerusalem and went into the Upper Room. And when the Day of Pentecost had come, they were filled with the Holy Spirit! And began to preach the Gospel! And the entire believing world “devoted themselves to the Apostles teaching... to fellowship... to the breaking of bread... and to prayer” (Acts 2:42); remember, as believers we need to devote ourselves to abiding in Christ... to walking in the Spirit... to saying no to our flesh... to living a life of faith... to studying God’s Word daily... to loving other people... to worship with God’s people every week... to fellowshipping with believers... to praying to God several times every day... and to seeking God’s will for our lives (read the following verses: Jn 13:34-35; 15:4-7; Gal 5:16; 1 Tim 6:12; Heb 10:23-25; Jam 1:21-22; 2:14, 20; 1 Pet 2:2; 1 Jn 1:6-10; 2:28; 3:18; 4:7-8; 5:4; 2 Jn 1:5-8). Beloved, those “ten” items are extremely important for believers to embrace.

WALKING WITH GOD IN LIFE

As mentioned early on, the attributes of God essentially refer to the *divine characteristics*, the *perfections*, and the *virtues* of God as they are revealed to us in Scripture — without understanding and embracing the foregoing qualities, God won’t be the “**GOD**” He is in your life; instead you will be making Him into *something He is not*. Another problem man has is that *he doesn’t see himself for who he really is* — as alluded to earlier, *we as believers are a dichotomy of two people, not just one person*... we are not only *spiritual creatures* as believers, we are still *fleshly creatures* — when God entered into our lives when we placed our trust in Him and accepted Him as our Savior, *He placed the Holy Spirit in our lives* (cf. the following passages: Jn 14:16-17, 26; 15:26; 16:13; Rom 5:5; Col 1:27; 1 Th 4:7-8; 2 Tim 1:14; Titus 3:5)... *yet God did not remove our flesh from our lives — just as Christ died for our sins on the cross, He now asks us to die to our sins* (read Rom 8:13 and Col 3:5); keep in mind, we don’t die *for* our sins, we die *to* our sins — Christ is the one who died *for* our sins; i.e., He is the one who paid the price for our sins; *not us! all He asks of us is that we “wage war against our flesh and this demonic sinful world,”* i.e., against our sinful nature and this sinful world.

Remember the words of the apostle John, “*Do not love the world, nor the things in the world... for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world (and Satan)! And the world is passing away, and all its lusts —[in contradistinction] the one who does the will of God abides forever*” (cf. 1 Jn 2:15-17). What is absolutely important for us as believers is that we *see God for who He truly is*, and *see ourself for who we truly are*... as a believer, we must embrace reality for what it really is, and not simply misinterpret things & change the discourse. Though there is a lot of ignorance in the Christian world, that doesn't mean it's okay for us to believe whatever we want to believe... though God won't throw us into hell at the end of the age, He will *judge us* accordingly; beloved, are you listening to what I'm saying? Give careful consideration to what Paul stated: “*If any man builds upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is to be revealed with fire (which will test the quality of each man's work). Now if any man's work which he has done endures, he will receive a reward. If any man work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire*” (1 Cor 3:12-15). Keep in mind, all of the emboldened words in those verses are *emphatic* in Greek, so read those verses again with that in mind. Obviously what Paul said is extremely poignant stuff — if you are truly a believer in Christ your eternal salvation is absolutely sure (that's not the issue). The significant issue is this, *God has called us all to walk in the light, and embrace Him as our Lord & Savior*... to not do so, means you are going to “*experience a lot of humiliation*” just prior to entering into the eternal state — beloved, do not make light of your faith, as if it is some little remedial issue... at the end of the age, *the life you lived as one of God's children is going to be completely revealed*. It's also important that you remember the words of the apostle John toward the end of his life — “*Little children, abide in Christ so that when He appears we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming*” (1 Jn 2:28). At the end of the age, God is going to appear before all of His children, and those who did not live for Christ and abide in Him, are going to be so *embarrassed* they will not be able to look Christ in the eye... instead, *they will turn away from Him in shame*. Now of all of the passages in Scripture, many believers have a difficult time accepting some of them; the reality is, the foregoing one might be the most poignant teachings for believers in all of Scripture — to be so *ashamed* at how one lived his life here on earth, is absolutely mind-boggling... when Christ looks them in the eye at the end of the age, they will be so *humiliated*, it will cause them to immediately turn away from Christ in shame; obviously *it is difficult to fathom how exceedingly painful that response would be*. Beloved, keep in mind, when you abide in Christ (i.e., when you make Christ your life) you will bear much fruit in life (read Jn 15:1-11); on the contrary, when you don't abide in Christ in this life, you will not bear much fruit at all.

Said the great apostle Paul, “*Those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit we their minds on the things of the Spirit*” (Rom 8:5). Obviously, there are two ways to live life — we can either live it according to *our fleshly desires and feelings*, or we can live it according to *the Spirit who*

lives in us and divine truth (i.e., our faith in the most High God). As many theologians say, “It is unfortunate that many preachers and teachers fail to explain this core principle to their congregations; therefore many believers find it very confusing.” Remember the words of Jesus to His disciples down in the Garden of Gethsemane the night before He went to the cross — He said to them, “Keep watching and praying that you ma not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak” (read Mt 36-46)... and time after time Jesus found them sleeping rather than praying — why was that? because their flesh had a very strong presence in their lives (just like it does in our lives; oftentimes our flesh simply rules in the moment; though that doesn’t happen all the time, it happens far more frequently than most believers think). Said the apostle Paul to the Galatians, “Walk by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desires of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in “opposition” to one another, so that you may not do the things that you wish” (Gal 5:16-17) — the issue is this, when we walk in the Spirit we will not fulfill the desires of the flesh; thus it’s incumbent for us as believers to “walk in the Spirit”... we cannot simply let our innate desires rule in our lives, as if that is acceptable to God. The reality is, we must have a God-consciousness as we walk through life, and not simply let fleshly thinking rule in our lives. When fleshly thoughts and desires are evident, we must turn from them immediately... to reflect upon fleshly thoughts will simply cause us to embrace them — as believers, we can’t play games with our flesh; when our flesh rules in the moment, so does sin...to deny it is to simply deceive oneself; all you need to do is reflect upon what transpired in the Garden of Eden with “Eve” when she was confronted by Satan (read Gen 3:1-6). The reality is, when you let fleshly desires fully express themselves, you will cave into them; remember, the moment you recognize its sinful wayward thinking, you must immediately turn from it — why is that? because it possesses strong fleshly desires; remember, the problem with caving into sin is that one is caving into a very strong innate desire! That’s why it is so difficult at times. Obviously the secret to overcoming sin is “learning to walk by the Spirit” (Gal 5:16). Keep in mind, when we walk by the Spirit, we are being led by His power (not our own); so we must be conscious of His presence in our lives, and desire to walk in the light and abide in Christ. When we abide in Christ and bear the fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, kindness, goodness, patience, faithfulness, and self-control), we will experience His peace and His joy (cf. Jn 15:11; Gal 5:22-23; Phil 4:6-7). Again, when we walk by the Spirit, we allow Him to control us, and as John Piper (the highly esteemed Chancellor of a Christian College and Seminar in Minneapolis) states, “And that we do by allowing the Spirit to control us when we keep our heart happy in God.” Remember, we walk by the Spirit when our hearts are resting in the promises of God; so when we live by faith in the Son of God who loved us and gave Himself for us, we will experience His joy, love, peace and grace. As the British Pastor, Philanthropist, and leader in the 19th century Christian Brethren Movement, George Muller, said: “The fight of faith is fought with the promises of God. And the fight of faith is the same as the fight to walk by the Spirit – He works when we rest in His promises.” By the way, the English born China Missionary, Hudson Taylor, who founded the Interdenominational China Inland Mission back in the 19th century, learned that “We

experience victory over temptation and know the guidance of the Lord, when we keep our heart happy in God by resting in His promises.”

As Steve Gallagher, the Founder and President of Pure Life Ministries, says: “The flesh is a way of thinking that is contrary to the will of God... that spiritual change is a life-long daily battle... minute by minute we will face choices as to what we think and how we behave... and as our intimacy with God increases, it produces a power not present early on in our faith; thus we then learn what it means to become a mature saint & walk in the Spirit. Remember, spiritual growth is not automatic... we grow in the likeness of Christ by daily cooperating with God's work in our inner being.” Beloved, that was extremely well stated, you may want to take the time to read again what Gallagher stated. And then there are the words of Jon Snyder, author, speaker & founder of “Mighty Man Ministries” — “We all know that our flesh has a very problematic presence in our lives, and that it essentially is the source of what we should not be doing or thinking; yet that knowledge is not sufficient to overcome the flesh... it is not by trying really hard to overcome the flesh that gives us victory over the flesh, and wins the war against the flesh... we win the war against the flesh by “abiding in Christ” and “walking in the Spirit” — that's how we overcome the flesh and put to death the deeds of the flesh” (cf. Jn 15:1-11; Gal 5:17; Rom 8:13). Beloved, this is how we stop sinning! Numerous passages in the NT support this truth (cf. Rom 12:2; 1 Cor 2:16; Jn 17:22); the reality is, we have the right and ability to think the same way Jesus thinks about things. Renewing our mind is an activity we can initiate at any time with the Holy Spirit who lives within us — simply take some time to sit with Him & ask Him to give you Jesus’ thoughts about the thing or person tempting you. As Snyder states, “Walking in the Spirit doesn't start when you face temptation... the truth is, if you wait until then, it is too late! Walking in the Spirit starts now! So ask God to give you new ways of thinking, seeing and feeling; in so doing, He will put His thoughts in you and give you new perspectives... thus when you are tempted, you will know how to think and have options you never had before.” The reality is, if we have the mind of Christ and the Holy Spirit in us, then we have the option to be spiritually minded and embrace divine truth, and walk in the Spirit. The only consistent way to overcome the sinful desires of our flesh, is to live step by step in the power of the Holy Spirit as He works in our hearts & minds; walking by faith in God’s Word under the Spirit’s control assures victory — remember, “We were buried with Christ through baptism into death... that we might walk in newness of life” (cf. Rom 6:4). The apostle Paul goes on to say, “Our old self was crucified with Christ... that we should no longer be slaves to sin” (Rom 6:6). The resurrection of Christ is what makes it possible for us to walk in newness of life... and because we are identified with Christ in His resurrection, we can walk in newness of life. Said Paul, “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect” (cf. Rom 12:2) — so spiritual transformation starts in the mind and heart; a mind dedicated to knowing & abiding in divine truth will produce a life that can stand the test of time... we resist temptation when we meditate on God's truth and let the Holy Spirit guide & shape our thoughts and behaviors; remember, the Holy Spirit is the one

who opens our hearts and minds to know and understand divine truth (cf. Jn 14:26; 16:13; Acts 16:14;).

How can we overcome the desires of the flesh and follow the Spirit? Essentially, that is what Galatians 5:16-17 teaches — “The flesh sets its desires against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; they are in opposition to each other, so that you may not do the things that you please” (Gal 5:17) — the message is this: the Spirit and the flesh are in constant conflict with each other; though God could have removed our fleshly nature from us when we were converted... He chose not to, that we would be ever mindful of our weaknesses, that we would continually be dependent on Christ and not ourselves. So instead of removing our old nature from us, God gave us His own Holy Spirit to dwell within us. The reality is, God's Spirit and our flesh are perpetually at war, and will continue to be at war until we are taken home to heaven. The believer's part in the conflict is to yield to the Spirit. Now to simplify everything that is going on within us is silly, because there is a war going on in our inner soul (cf. Rom 7:18, 23; 8:5ff; 7:15ff). The questions that all believers ask are these: “How do we overcome the desires of the flesh and follow the Spirit?” and “How do we have victory over sin?” Though God has made each of us a brand new creation, yet He has so willed that we continue to live here on earth in our fleshly bodies — thus we will continue to be tempted and fall into sin daily. So what's the answer? We don't possess the strength and the grace to overcome our sinful inner core... thus “we must walk by the Spirit and not gratify the desires of the flesh” (Gal 5:16). That is the key to overcoming sin; we simply cannot live according to God's standards in our own strength (cf. Gal 5:2-12). Now since we can't do whatever we want in life, and let our fleshly desires rule in our life, instead our lives must be marked by love & service to one another. Remember, Jesus said “loving God and loving others is the greatest of all commandments” (cf. Mt 22:24-40). Interestingly enough, the apostle Paul emphasized “love for others” (cf. Gal 5:13-15), because that's how we outwardly show our love for God; again, we do so by loving others! (cf. Mt 25:31-46; in particular vv. 40 & 45). Keep in mind, once the greatest of all the commandments characterizes who we are, divine truth will start to rule in our hearts and minds... the reality is, as believers we should desire to bring glory to God by loving His creation; this is the context in which Paul says, “Walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh” (Gal 5:16). Keep in mind, we are to walk by the Spirit who brought us to a saving knowledge of Jesus, and is now leading us to live more like Christ. It is only when we walk by the Spirit that we overcome our sinful desires. The apostle Paul went on to identify the marks of those who walk by the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control... he then said, “Since we live by the Spirit, let us walk by the Spirit” (cf. Gal 5:25). Now since there is a war going on in our inner man between our flesh and the Spirit, we must remind ourselves daily that our old life is done, and that our old life was crucified with Christ. Remember, believers are identified with Christ in His death — not only was Christ Himself crucified on Calvary, every believer was crucified with Him (cf. Gal 2:20)... so our old evil nature was crucified with Christ; thus it has no more claims to rule in our lives... hence, that should be true to our behavior as well. As Paul said, “I have been crucified

with Christ; it is no longer I who lives, but Christ lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me” (cf. Gal 2:20). So Christ did not die for us in order that we might go on living our life as we choose... He died for us so that from now on He might be able to live His life in us. So the Christian lives by continual dependence on Christ... by yielding to Him... and by allowing Him to live His life in us; thus we must live for God. Let me expand upon our being crucified with Christ — every believer was crucified with Christ on the cross in order to die to sin; while believers continue to live on physically, Christ also lives within them spiritually. Christ’s resurrection power through the Holy Spirit is worked out through believers (cf. Rom 6:4-11) who choose to live by faith in the Son of God. So rather than living a sinful life, we must pray, trust, and follow God’s Word by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. In order to give greater understanding to this subject, give careful attention to what is stated in the following paragraph.

What does it mean to walk by the Spirit? Jesus expressed it this way to His disciples the night before He went to the cross (cf. John 15) — “we need to abide in Him,” which essentially is the same thing as “walking in the Spirit.” If we abide in Christ, the Spirit is working within us; so when we abide in Jesus, the Holy Spirit is producing “fruit” in our lives. Walking in the Spirit basically is a God consciousness — it is having Christ foremost in all our affections, and pursuing God with all of our heart; remember the great commandment is to “love the Lord your God with all your heart” (cf. Mt 22:37-38); thus it is to serve God alone with all your heart. Now abiding in Christ involves the reading and studying Scripture, Bible meditation, prayer, fellowship, worship, church attendance, and serving and loving other people — these are ways in which we abide in Christ... and as we abide in Christ, His Spirit works in our lives and we then walk in the Spirit. Keep in mind, our goal as believers is to continually live a life of walking in the Spirit. Remember, the Holy Spirit takes up residence in the believers life at the moment of salvation, and empowers him to overcome sin and live for God’s glory and purposes... yet only those who choose to walk with Him have significant success in doing so. As Charles Stanley, one of America’s greatest preachers states, “Walking by the Spirit denotes reliance upon Him — He leads the way and we follow... as He speaks to our hearts we listen and obey His directions... when our hearts and minds turn to Him, He gives sensitivity and understanding to the things of God.” With that in mind, we must focus our thoughts on Him, and ask Him to guide us, and when He gives it to us we must rely on His power to obey. Keep in mind, the Holy Spirit supplies everything we need to live a godly life, and He produces His amazing fruit in us (cf. Gal 5:22-23). Remember the words of Paul to believers: “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have received from God, and that you are not your own; for you have been bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body” (1 Cor 6:19-20). Again, those who walk in the Spirit rely on the Holy Spirit to guide them in thought, word and deed (cf. Rom 6:11-14). To walk in the Spirit is to be filled with the Spirit (cf. Eph 5:18-20)... those who walk in the Spirit follow the Spirit’s lead, and “let the word of Christ dwell in them richly” (Col 3:16)... the Spirit uses the word of God “for teaching, rebuking, correc-

ting and training in righteousness" (2 Tim 3:16). The night before Jesus went to the cross, He said to His disciples: "I shall not leave you comfortless, I will send you the Helper (the Holy Spirit) to you, and He will abide in you and teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all I have said to you" (cf. Jn 14:16-26). Beloved, may the Holy Spirit comfort your heart and give you the grace to walk in the light to the praise of His glory.