

The Three Pillars of Revelation

Pillar 1: The Nature of God

Pillar 2: The Plan of God

Pillar 3: The Way of God

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God is spirit ... God is light ... In him was life, and the life was the light of men.

(John 4:24a, 1 John 1:5bα, John 1:4 ESV)

For from the rising of the sun to its setting **my name will be great among the nations** ...

(Malachi 1:11a ESV)

Then God said, “**Let us make man in our image**, after our likeness. ...” male and female he created them.

(Genesis 1:26a, 27b ESV)

... **we are children of God**, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and **fellow heirs with Christ** ...

(Romans 8:16b-17a ESV)

... **according to the Way** ... I worship the God of our fathers ... (Acts 24:14aβ ESV)

... your **Teacher** will not hide himself anymore, but your eyes shall see your **Teacher**. And your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, “**This is the way, walk in it**” ... (Isaiah 30:20b-21a ESV)

God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. (1 John 4:16b ESV)

The Bible is the revelation by the Creator God of himself to his most important creation – human beings. This revelation is centered around three main themes:

- The **Nature of God** – who and what is God? Where is God? What is God like?
- The **Plan of God** – what is God’s purpose for human beings? How is God accomplishing this purpose?
- The **Way of God** – what does God require of human beings? How can we fulfill our part to accomplish his purpose?

This paper, “**First Pillar - The Nature of God**”, is the first part of a single document, “**The Three Pillars of Revelation**”. Due to size constraints, the document has been split in three papers for publishing. Please also see the other two parts, “**Second Pillar - The Plan of God**” and “**Third Pillar - The Way of God**”.

These three papers analyze the three **Pillars of Revelation** and explore the questions around them.

These papers do NOT comprise a “philosophical” investigation. The focus is always on what the Bible actually says. What God himself reveals to us in his inspired word.

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1. The Nature of God

God, the Father, requires human beings to worship him:

But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the **true worshipers will worship the Father** in spirit and truth, for **the Father is seeking such people to worship him**. **God is spirit**, and those who worship him must **worship in spirit and truth**. (John 4:23-24 ESV)

In order to worship “**in truth**”, it is necessary God that would reveal himself so that we human beings can know how and why to worship.¹ This is fundamental to the Bible. Knowing the Nature of God is essential for all True Worshipers of God.

1.1 What is God?

This is the most fundamental question. To understand the Nature of God one must first answer this question:

And without faith it is impossible to please him, for **whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists** and that he rewards those who seek him. (Hebrews 11:6 ESV)

The stupid man cannot know; the fool cannot understand this ...

The fool says in his heart, “There is no God.” (Psalm 92:6, 14:1a ESV)

The Creator God reaches out to his creation through his revelation² and through the innate desire within human beings for a relationship with God:

He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, **he has put eternity into man’s heart** ... (Ecclesiastes 3:11a ESV)

Understanding that God exists is the first step in establishing a relationship with God.

1.1.1 God is Spirit

“God is spirit”, but what is “spirit”? **Jesus discussed this with Nicodemus:**

Jesus answered him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Nicodemus said to him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?”

Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit (pneuma), he cannot enter the kingdom of God. **That which is born of the flesh is flesh**, and **that which is born of the Spirit (pneuma) is spirit (pneuma)**. Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ **The wind (pneuma)** blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. **So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit (pneuma).**” (John 3:3-8 ESV)

Jesus is clear that to participate in the Kingdom of God, one must be “spirit”. Jesus uses the metaphor of “wind” to describe “spirit”. The Greek word, πνεῦμα - pneuma, carries a range of meaning including “wind”, “breath”, “spirit”.³ The Hebrew word for “spirit”, רוּחַ - ruah, similarly carries a range of meaning including “wind” and “breath”:⁴

They went into the ark with Noah, two and two of all flesh in which there was **the breath (ruah) of life**.

But God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the livestock that were with him in the ark. And God made **a wind (ruah) blow over the earth**, and the waters subsided. (Genesis 7:15, 8:1 ESV)

A Psalmist makes a play on words to describe **“spirit beings”** – God and the angels”:

Bless [YHWH], O my [being]!

[YHWH] my God, you are very great!

You are clothed with splendor and majesty,

covering yourself with light as with a garment, stretching out the heavens like a tent.

He lays the beams of his chambers on the waters; he makes the clouds his chariot;

he rides on the wings of the wind (ruah);

he makes his [angels] [spirits] (ruah),⁵ his ministers a flaming fire. (Psalm 104:1-4 ESV)

¹ The concept of “worshipping” God is discussed in the paper “**True Worship of the True God**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

² See sections **3.1 General Revelation** and **3.2 Special Revelation** in the paper “**Third Pillar - The Way of God**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

³ See www.esv.org Greek Word Detail, GEL pages 680-685

⁴ See Holladay pages 334-335

⁵ The old KJV translation is preferable in this case.

The author of Hebrews alludes to this verse in his contrast of Jesus Christ with the angels:

Of the angels he says, “**He makes his angels [spirits] (pneuma)**, and his ministers a flame of fire.” ... Are they not all **ministering spirits (pneuma)** sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation? (Hebrews 1:7, 14 ESV)

The **Prophet Isaiah** makes a distinction between “physical” beings and “spiritual” beings:

The Egyptians are man, and not God, and their **horses are flesh, and not spirit (ruah)**. (Isaiah 31:3a ESV)

The **Apostle Paul** describes **the spirit body** as a new creation, “changed”, “imperishable”, “immortal”:

If there is a natural body, there is also **a spiritual (pneumatikos)⁶ body**. ... I tell you this, brothers: **flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God ... we shall all be changed** ... For this **perishable body** must put on the **imperishable**, and this mortal body must put on **immortality**. (1 Corinthians 15:44b, 50a, 51bβ, 53 ESV)

Spirit is distinct from matter. Spirit cannot be physically observed. For human beings to participate in the Kingdom of God, we must be changed from a physical body to a spirit body. However, **Spirit beings can manifest themselves in physical form and can interact with physical beings:**

And **[YHWH] appeared to him** by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day. He lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, **three men were standing in front of him**. ... So **the men turned from there and went toward Sodom**, but Abraham still stood before [YHWH]. ... **The two angels came to Sodom** in the evening ... (Genesis 18:1-2a, 22, 19:1a ESV)

Now **Thomas**, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he **said to them**, “Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe.”

Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although **the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them** and said, “Peace be with you.” Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe.” (John 20:24-27 ESV)

In the year that King Uzziah died **I saw [YHWH]** sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. **Above him stood the seraphim**. ... Then **one of the seraphim** flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. And he **touched my mouth** and said: “Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for.” (Isaiah 6:1-2a, 6-7 ESV)

Spirit is distinct from matter. All matter is created. God can also create spirit, though God himself is uncreated, eternal. Human beings cannot directly interact with spirit beings – they must manifest in some way for interaction to occur. **Human beings must be transformed into spirit beings in order to participate in the Kingdom of God.**

1.1.2 God is Light

The Greek word φῶς - phōs, a neuter noun, carries pretty much the same range of meaning as the

English word “light”.⁷ **The use of the word “light” to describe the Nature of God is clearly metaphoric:**

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “**I am the light (phos) of the world**.”⁸ Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have **the light (phos) of life**.” (John 8:12 ESV)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and **the life was the light (phos) of men**. **The light (phos) shines in the darkness**, and the darkness has not overcome it. (John 1:1-5 ESV)

... the **people dwelling in darkness have seen a great light (phos)**, and for those dwelling in the region and shadow of death, **on them a light (phos) has dawned**. (Matthew 4:16 ESV; this is an allusion to Isaiah 9:2)

This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that **God is light (phos)**, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if **we walk in the light (phos)**, as **he is in the light (phos)**, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. (1 John 1:5-7)

⁶ Here Paul uses an adjective related to *pneuma*, πνευματικός - pneumatikos, meaning “spiritual”; see www.eav.org Greek Word Detail, GEL page 685

⁷ See GEL pages 879-880

⁸ See also John 9:5

The metaphor is evident on several levels:

- Light is contrasted with “**darkness**”
- God is both light and he is “**in the light**”⁹
- The light illuminates the way, “**walk in the light**”
- The light brings life, “**the light of life**”
- Jesus is the manifestation, “**the light of the world**”, “**on them a light has dawned**”

Light as a metaphor is comparable to “wind” as a metaphor. Both light and wind are physical things, explainable by science, but they are NOT directly observable to human perception. The effect of both wind and light is observable, but the cause is NOT. **As human beings we cannot through any physical means observe or discover God.** God reveals himself to human beings as he sees fit, and he has in fact made his existence abundantly clear for all human beings to observe.¹⁰

God used light as a manifestation of himself to lead the Israelites out of Egypt:

And [YHWH] **went before them** by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them along the way, and by night in a pillar of fire **to give them light (’or)**, that they might **travel by day and by night**. (Exodus 13:21 ESV)¹¹

The Hebrew verb אֹר - ’or, carries a range of meaning including “be light”, “give light”, “shine”, “cause to shine”; the related nouns אֹר - ’or, masculine, and אֹרָה - ’orah, feminine, both mean “light”.¹²

The “giving of light” by the pillar of fire was both physical and metaphorical – the Israelites required illumination to “**travel by day and by night**”, and YHWH’s purpose in taking them to the desert was to **reveal himself to them**:

[YHWH] spoke to Moses, saying,

“Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, ‘Thus you shall bless the people of Israel: you shall say to them,

[YHWH] bless you and keep you;

[YHWH] make his face to shine (’or) upon you and be gracious to you;

[YHWH] lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.’

“So shall they put my name upon the people of Israel, and I will bless them.” (Numbers 6:22-27 ESV)

A Psalmist picks up this refrain extending the objective to all peoples in all nations:

May God be gracious to us and bless us and **make his face to shine (’or) upon us**,

that **your way** may be known **on earth**, your saving power among **all nations**.

Let **the peoples** praise you, O God; let **all the peoples** praise you! (Psalm 67:1-3 ESV)¹³

David recognizes YHWH as “his light”, his source of success:

[YHWH] is **my light (’or)** and **my salvation**; whom shall I fear?

[YHWH] is **the stronghold of my life**; of whom shall I be afraid? (Psalm 27:1 ESV)

Another Psalmist parallels “light” with “truth”:

Send out your light (’or) and your truth; let them lead me;

let them bring me to your holy hill and to your dwelling! (Psalm 43:3 ESV)

Only from God’s light can we, as human beings, **come to see light**, meaning to live by the Way of God:

For with you is the fountain of life; **in your light (’or) do we see light (’or)**. (Psalm 36:9 ESV)

Blessed are the people who know the festal shout,

who walk, [YHWH], **in the light (’or) of your face**¹⁴ ... (Psalm 89:15 ESV)

The **Prophet Simeon** recognized the child **Jesus as the manifestation of the light**:

Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word;

for **my eyes have seen your salvation** that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,

a light (phos) for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel.

(Luke 2:29-32 ESV; this alludes to Isaiah 42:6b, 49:6b)

⁹ See Psalm 104:2, 1 Timothy 6:16

¹⁰ See section **3.1 General Revelation** in the paper “**Third Pillar - The Way of God**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

¹¹ See also Nehemiah 9:12,19, Psalm 105:39

¹² See Holladay page 7; TWOT article 52 pages 25-27

¹³ See also Psalms 31:16, 80:3,7,19, 118:27, 119:135, Daniel 9:17

¹⁴ See also Psalm 44:3, Isaiah 2:5

Jesus emphasized that he was “the light” and his followers were required to “walk in the light”:

Jesus answered, “Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because **he sees the light (phos) of this world**. But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because **the light (phos) is not in him**.”

So Jesus said to them, “**The light (phos) is among you** for a little while longer. **Walk while you have the light (phos)**, lest darkness overtake you. The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going. **While you have the light (phos), believe in the light (phos), that you may become sons of light (phos)**.” ... **I have come into the world as light (phos)**, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness. (John 11:9-10, 12:35-36, 46 ESV; see also Acts 26:18, 23, 1 John 2:7-11)

The **Apostle Paul** is explicit that Jesus is the light because he is the **manifestation of the Gospel**:

And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, **to keep them from seeing the light (phōtismos)¹⁵ of the gospel of the glory of Christ**, who is the image of God. For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake. For God, who said, “**Let light (phos) shine out of darkness**,”¹⁶ has shone in our hearts to give **the light (phōtismos) of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ**. (2 Corinthians 4:3-6 ESV)

James, the brother of Jesus, includes **God the Father** in the metaphor:

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from **the Father of lights (phos)**, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. (James 1:17 ESV)

The **Prophet Ezekiel** saw a vision of YHWH approaching the New Temple:

Then he led me to the gate, the gate facing east. And behold, **the glory of the God of Israel** was coming from the east. And the sound of his coming was like the sound of many waters, and **the earth shone (‘or) with his glory**. And the vision I saw ... (Ezekiel 43:1-3a ESV)

The **Prophet Micah** looks to the time when the New Israel responds to the teaching of God:

Rejoice not over me, O my enemy; when I fall, **I shall rise**;
when I sit in darkness, **[YHWH] will be a light (‘or) to me**.
I will bear the indignation of [YHWH] because I have sinned against him,
until he pleads my cause and executes judgment for me.
He will bring me out to the light (‘or); I shall look upon his vindication. (Micah 7:8-9 ESV)

The **Prophet Isaiah** and the **Apostle John** look to the very end of the age when God the Father comes to this earth:

The sun shall be no more your light (‘or) by day,
nor for brightness shall the moon give you light (‘or);
but **[YHWH] will be your everlasting light (‘or)**, and your God will be your glory.
Your sun shall no more go down, nor your moon withdraw itself;
for **[YHWH] will be your everlasting light (‘or)**, and your days of mourning shall be ended.
(Isaiah 60:19-20 ESV)

And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. And **the city has no need of sun or moon** to shine on it, for **the glory of God gives it light (photizo)¹⁷**, and **its lamp is the Lamb**. **By its light (phos) will the nations walk**, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. ... And night will be no more. **They will need no light (phos) of lamp or sun**, for **the Lord God will be their light (photizo)**, and they will reign forever and ever.
(Revelation 21:22-26, 22:5 ESV)

“Light” represents “truth”. “Light” shines the path upon which God requires True Worshipers to walk. YHWH, Jesus Christ, and even God the Father are represented by “light” – ultimately, they will shine the true light over the whole world. There will be no darkness.

¹⁵ φωτισμός - phōtismos, a masculine noun, is more or less synonymous with *phos*, it is used only by Paul in this passage; see GEL page 881

¹⁶ This alludes to Genesis 1:3.

¹⁷ φωτίζω - phōtizō, a verb meaning “bring to light”, “enlighten”; see www.esv.org Greek Word Detail, GEL pages 880-881

1.1.3 God is Self-sustaining Life

The words for “life” in both Hebrew and Greek are somewhat complicated:¹⁸

- חַיָּה - ḥayah is the root verb; it carries a range of meaning including “be alive”, “stay alive”, “be revived”, “come back to life”, “bring to life”, “keep alive”
- חַי - ḥay, can be either a noun or an adjective; as a noun it means “life”; as an adjective it means “living”
- חַיִּים - hayyim, is the plural of ḥay; it carries a range of meaning including “lifetime”, “duration of life”, “state of being alive”
- ζωή - zoe, a noun, meaning “life”, “living thing”
- ζωοποιέω - zoopoieo, a verb meaning “give life”, “make alive”

A fundamental characteristic of God is that God is alive – God is self sustaining, indestructible, eternal life:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and **the Word was God**. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. **In him was life (zoe)**, and the life (zoe) was the light of men. (John 1:1-4 ESV)

Now if perfection had been attainable through the Levitical priesthood ... what further need would there have been for another priest to arise ... For **it is evident that our Lord ... has become a priest**, not on the basis of a legal requirement concerning bodily descent, but **by the power of an indestructible life (zoe)**. (Hebrews 7:11a, 14aα, 16 ESV)

And I heard **the man clothed in linen**, who was above the waters of the stream; he raised his right hand and his left hand toward heaven and **swore by him who lives (ḥay) forever** ... (Daniel 12:7a ESV)

As YHWH, **Jesus Christ referred to himself in this way many times**. For example, at the passing of the death sentence on the men of military age, **YHWH avows himself by his self-existence**:

But truly, **as I live (ḥay)**, and **as all the earth shall be filled with the glory of [YHWH]**, none of the men who have seen my glory and my signs that I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and yet have put me to the test these ten times and have not obeyed my voice, shall see the land that I swore to give to their fathers. And none of those who despised me shall see it.

How long shall this wicked congregation grumble against me? I have heard the grumbings of the people of Israel, which they grumble against me. Say to them, **‘As I live (ḥay), declares [YHWH]**, what you have said in my hearing I will do to you: your dead bodies shall fall in this wilderness ...’ (Numbers 14:21-23, 27-29a ESV; see also Deuteronomy 32:40)

In a prophecy recorded by Isaiah, **YHWH appeals to his self-existence to guarantee that he will bring salvation to the whole earth**:

Thus says [YHWH]:

In a time of favor I have answered you;¹⁹ in a day of salvation I have helped you;
I will keep you and give you as a covenant to the people,
to establish the [earth], to apportion the desolate heritages ...
Lift up your eyes around and see; they all gather, they come to you.

As I live (ḥay), declares [YHWH],

you shall put them all on as an ornament; you shall bind them on as a bride does.
(Isaiah 49:8, 18 ESV)²⁰

This refrain was taken up by **many Old Testament authors to refer to God**, for example:²¹

And now, my daughter, do not fear. I (Boaz) will do for you (Ruth) all that you ask, for all my fellow townsmen know that you are a worthy woman. And now it is true that I am a redeemer. Yet there is a redeemer nearer than I. Remain tonight, and in the morning, if he will redeem you, good; let him do it. But if he is not willing to redeem you, then, **as [YHWH] lives (ḥay), I will redeem you**. (Ruth 3:11-13 ESV)

Jonathan spoke well of David to Saul his father and said to him, “Let not the king sin against his servant David, because he has not sinned against you, and because his deeds have brought good to you. ...” And **Saul listened to the voice of Jonathan**. Saul swore, **“As [YHWH] lives (ḥay), he shall not be put to death.”** (1 Samuel 19:4, 6 ESV)

¹⁸ See TWOT article 644 pages 279-282, Holladay pages 101-102, TDOT volume IV pages 324-344, TDNT volume II pages 832-875, GEL pages 340-342

¹⁹ The prophecy is directed to “you”, “the servant”, True Worshipers, the New Testament Church.

²⁰ See also Jeremiah 22:24, 46:18, Ezekiel 14:16, 18, 20, 16:48, 17:16, 19, 18:3, 20:3, 31, 33, 33:11, 27, 35:6, 11, Zephaniah 2:9

²¹ See also Judges 8:19, 1 Samuel 14:39, 45, 25:26, 26:10, 16, 28:10, 29:6, 2 Samuel 2:27, 4:9, 14:11, 15:21, 1 Kings 1:29, 17:12, 18:10, 15, 2 Kings 2:2, 4, 6, 4:30, 5:16, 20, Jeremiah 4:2, 5:2, 12:16, 38:16, 44:26, Hosea 4:15

And David said to Abigail, “Blessed be [YHWH], the God of Israel, who sent you this day to meet me! Blessed be your discretion, and blessed be you, who have kept me this day from bloodguilt and from working salvation with my own hand! For as surely as [YHWH], the God of Israel, lives (hay), who has restrained me from hurting you, unless you had hurried and come to meet me, truly by morning there had not been left to Nabal so much as one male.” (1 Samuel 25:32-34 ESV)

Then David's anger was greatly kindled against the man, and he said to Nathan, “As [YHWH] lives (hay), the man who has done this deserves to die ...” (2 Samuel 12:5 ESV)

[YHWH] lives (hay), and blessed be my rock, and exalted be my God, the rock of my salvation ... (2 Samuel 22:47 ESV // Psalm 18:46)

Then King Solomon swore by [YHWH], saying, “God do so to me and more also if this word does not cost Adonijah his life! Now therefore as [YHWH] lives (hay), who has established me and placed me on the throne of David my father, and who has made me a house, as he promised, Adonijah shall be put to death today.” (1 Kings 2:23-24 ESV)

Now Elijah the Tishbite, of Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab, “As [YHWH], the God of Israel, lives (hay), before whom I stand, there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word.” (1 Kings 17:1 ESV)

But Micaiah said, “As [YHWH] lives (hay), what [YHWH] says to me, that I will speak.” (1 Kings 22:14 ESV // 2 Chronicles 18:13)

And Elisha said, “As [YHWH] of hosts lives (hay), before whom I stand, were it not that I have regard for Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, I would neither look at you nor see you. ...” (2 Kings 3:14 ESV)

Therefore, behold, the days are coming, declares [YHWH], when it shall no longer be said, ‘As [YHWH] lives (hay)’ who brought up the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt,’ but ‘As [YHWH] lives (hay)’ who brought up the people of Israel out of the north country and out of all the countries where he had driven them.’ For I will bring them back to their own land that I gave to their fathers. (Jeremiah 16:14-15 ESV // Jeremiah 23:7-8)

The state of being alive is fundamental to the Nature of God. The Old Testament repeatedly refers to God as “the living God”, for example:²²

Behold, [YHWH] our God has shown us his glory and greatness, and we have heard his voice out of the midst of the fire. This day we have seen God speak with man, and man still live (hayah). Now therefore why should we die? For this great fire will consume us. If we hear the voice of [YHWH] our God any more, we shall die. For who is there of all flesh, that has heard the voice of the living (hay) God speaking out of the midst of fire as we have, and has still lived (hayah)? (Deuteronomy 5:24-26 ESV)

And Joshua said to the people of Israel, “Come here and listen to the words of [YHWH] your God.” And Joshua said, “Here is how you shall know that the living (hay) God is among you ... when the soles of the feet of the priests bearing the ark of [YHWH], the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan shall be cut off from flowing, and the waters coming down from above shall stand in one heap.” (Joshua 3:9-10a, 13 ESV)

Jesus is specific that both he and God the Father each has “life in himself”:

For as the Father has life (zoe) in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life (zoe) in himself. (John 5:26 ESV)

The Apostle John assets that he and the other Apostles are first-hand witnesses of eternal life made manifest in the person of Jesus Christ:

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life (zoe)—the life (zoe) was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life (zoe), which was with the Father and was made manifest to us—that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you ... (1 John 1:1-3a ESV)

Both the Old Testament and the New Testament are unequivocal that self-sustaining, indestructible eternal life, is fundamental to God the Father and Jesus Christ. This life is inherent to their existence.

²² See also 1 Samuel 17:26,36, 2 Kings 19:4,16, Psalm 42:2, Isaiah 37:4,17, Jeremiah 10:10, 23:36, Daniel 6:20,26, Hosea 1:10
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1.2 Who is God?

Jesus Christ, as YHWH, delivered very personal revelations to **the Prophet Isaiah**. These are recorded in Isaiah chapters forty through sixty-six. In these chapters, YHWH is quoted more than two dozen times, saying **“I am ...”**, for example:²³

I am [YHWH], and there is no other, **besides me there is no god**;
I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and **there is none like me** ...
I am [YHWH], **who made all things** ... the heavens ... the earth by myself ...
I am [YHWH]; that is my name; **my glory I give to no other** ...
I, **I am [YHWH]**, and **besides me there is no savior**.
I am [YHWH], your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, **your King**.
I [YHWH] speak the truth; I declare what is right.
I am the first, and **I am the last**.
(Isaiah 45:5a, 46:9b, 44:24b, 42:8a, 43:11,15, 45:19b, 48:12b ESV)

These first-person statements by God go very far to describe **“who is God”**. The identification of YHWH as **“I AM”** goes back to chapter three of Exodus when YHWH revealed himself to Moses.²⁴

The **Apostle John** records that on several occasions Jesus identified himself as **“I AM”**:

“... I told you that you would die in your sins, for **unless you believe that [I AM] you will die in your sins**.”
So they said to him, **“Who are you?”** Jesus said to them, “Just what I have been telling you from the beginning. ...” So Jesus said to them, **“When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that [I AM] ...”** Jesus said to them, **“Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, [I AM].”**
(John 8:24-25, 28, 58, see also 6:20, 35, 48, 51, 8:12, 9:5, 10:7, 9, 11, 14, 11:25, 14:6, 15:1, 18:5-8)

Clearly, **Jesus Christ is the same divine being who was known as YHWH**.²⁵ As YHWH he is identified as the Creator, The Giver of Life, and the Source of Salvation. The following sections examine these topics in more detail.

1.2.1 God is the Creator

The ability to create, to bring something into existence from nothing, is an important defining characteristic of God. Only God can do this. The Hebrew verb for “create” is בָּרָא - bara’.²⁶ The physical creation began with the universe:

In the beginning, **God created (bara’) the heavens and the earth**.
These are the [histories] of the heavens and the earth **when they were created (bara’)** ...
(Genesis 1:1, 2:4a ESV)

Psalms extoll the greatness of God demonstrated by the physical creation:

[YHWH] God of hosts, **who is mighty as you** are, [YHWH] ...
The heavens are yours; the earth also is yours;
the world and all that is in it, you have founded them.
The north and the south, **you have created (bara’) them**; (Psalm 89:8a, 11-12a ESV)
Praise [YHWH]! Praise [YHWH] from the heavens; praise him in the heights!
Praise him, all his **angels**; praise him, all his **hosts**!
Praise him, **sun and moon**, praise him, all you shining **stars**!
Praise him, you **highest heavens**, and you **waters above the heavens**!
Let them praise the name of [YHWH]!
For he commanded and they were created (bara’). (Psalm 148:1-5 ESV)

The Prophet Isaiah records the words of the Creator:²⁷

I made the earth and created man on it;
it was my hands that stretched out the heavens, and I commanded all their host.
For thus says [YHWH], **who created (bara’) the heavens** (he is God!),
who formed the earth and made it (he established it);
he did not create (bara’) it empty, **he formed it to be inhabited**!):
I am [YHWH], and there is no other. (Isaiah 45:12, 18 ESV)

²³ See also Isaiah 41:4,10,13,14, 42:6, 43:3,5,12,13,25, 44:6, 45:5,6,7,22, 46:4, 48:12,17, 49:23,26, 51:12,15, 52:6, 60:16

²⁴ See the discussion of this passage in section **1.4.2.2 Seminal Scriptures**.

²⁵ See also John 1:1-3, 1 Corinthians 8:6, Colossians 1:16, Hebrews 1:2

²⁶ See **TWOT** article 278 pages 127-128

²⁷ See also Isaiah 42:5, Amos 4:13

After the initial creation, **the earth became corrupted**.²⁸

The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep.
And the Spirit (ruah) of God was hovering over the face of the waters. (Genesis 1:2 ESV)

The **remedying of this state of corruption** is described in Genesis chapter one verses two through twenty-five; it is alluded to by a Psalmist:

[YHWH], how manifold are your works!
In wisdom have you made them all; **the earth is full of your creatures**.
When you send forth your Spirit, **they are created (bara')**, and **you renew the face of the ground**.
(Psalm 104:24, 30 ESV)

Implicit in the physical creation is its **ongoing sustenance**:

And **he established them forever and ever; he gave a decree**, and **it shall not pass away**.
(Psalm 148:6 ESV)

To whom then will you compare me, that I should be like him? says the Holy One.
Lift up your eyes on high and see: **who created (bara') these?**
He who brings out their host by number, calling them all by name;²⁹
by the greatness of his might and because he is strong in power, **not one is missing**.
Have you not known? Have you not heard?
[YHWH] is the everlasting God, **the Creator (bara') of the ends of the earth**.
He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. (Isaiah 40:25-26, 28 ESV)

The author of Hebrews affirms that it is **Jesus Christ**, YHWH, who directed the creation and who controls the sustenance of the universe:

... in these last days he has spoken to us by **his Son**, whom he appointed the heir of all things, **through whom also he created the world**. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and **he upholds the universe by the word of his power**. (Hebrews 1:2-3a ESV)

All that exists was created by God – he owns it. **God has a purpose for his creation**. In the next section, **1.2.2 God is the Giver of Life**, this paper discusses **the creation of life**. God's purpose is discussed in detail in section **2. The Plan of God**, in the paper, **"Second Pillar - The Plan of God"**, located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca. God's Plan has been very carefully put together – in fact, **the Plan of God has been "created"**. **It started with the Sabbath**:

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And **on the seventh day God finished his work** that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done.
So **God blessed the seventh day and made it holy**, because on it **God rested from all his work that he had done in creation (bara')**. (Genesis 2:1-3 ESV)

The Sabbath was an integral part of the initial re-creation. God made the seventh day holy – no other day of the week can be holy. **The keeping of the Sabbath is the cornerstone of the True Worship of God**.³⁰ Later God worked with the Patriarchs to establish the promises upon which he would work out his Plan.³¹ The Plan first began to be realized in the creation of the Nation of Israel:

But now thus says [YHWH], **he who created (bara') you**, O Jacob, he who formed you, **O Israel**:
Fear not, for **I have redeemed you**; I have called you by name, you are mine.
I am [YHWH], your Holy One, **the Creator (bara') of Israel, your King**. (Isaiah 43:1, 15 ESV)

Soon after the creation of the Nation of Israel, they fell into sin in the "golden calf incident".³² Moses successfully petitioned YHWH to NOT destroy the nation.³³ YHWH then voluntarily entered into the **Covenant of Performance**:³⁴

And he said, "Behold, **I am [cutting] a covenant**. Before all your people **I will do marvels, such as have not been created (bara') in all the earth or in any nation**. And **all the people** among whom you are **shall see the work of [YHWH]**, for it is an awesome thing that I will do with you. ..." (Exodus 34:10 ESV)

²⁸ For a discussion of how this happened, see section **1. The Foundation of the World**, in the paper **"The Human Condition"** located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

²⁹ See also Psalm 147:4

³⁰ The Sabbath is discussed in detail in section **8. When to Worship – the Sabbath**, in the paper **"True Worship of the True God"**, located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

³¹ See section **3. The Covenant of Promise** in the paper **"Covenants of Grace"**, and section **11.2 Abraham and the Promises of God** in the paper **"The Writings of Moses"**, both located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca

³² See Exodus 32:1-35

³³ See Exodus 33:12-16

³⁴ See Exodus 34:1-27; for a discussion of this covenant, see section **9.3 The Covenant of Performance**, in the paper **"True Worship of the True God"**, located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

By this covenant, **God made an unequivocal promise to accomplish his purpose through Israel**, but the physical nation of ancient Israel failed miserably and was destroyed. **How can God fulfill his promise?** This is discussed in more detail in section **2.3.2 The Purpose of Israel** in the paper, “**Second Pillar - The Plan of God**”, located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca. Briefly, God promises to “**do marvels, such as have not been created (bara’) in all the earth**”. These marvels are the working out of the Plan of God. The **Prophet Isaiah** was given some details by YHWH:

You have heard; now see all this; and will you not declare it?
From this time forth **I announce to you new things**, hidden things that you have not known.
They are created (bara’) now, not long ago;
before today you have never heard of them, lest you should say, ‘Behold, I knew them.’
You have never heard, you have never known, **from of old your ear has not been opened**.
For **I knew that you would surely deal treacherously**, and that from before birth you were called a rebel.
(Isaiah 48:6-8 ESV)

The most likely time that Isaiah received these revelations was during the reign of Manasseh, the worst king of the Southern Kingdom. The Northern Kingdom had been destroyed, and Manasseh was setting the Southern Kingdom irretrievably on the path to its destruction. The die was cast for the ancient nation of Israel. Now **God began to reveal to Isaiah how he would fulfill the Covenant of Promise** – there would be a **New Israel** in the World Tomorrow.³⁵ **God was carefully “creating” his Plan** – revealing “new things”:

For the sake of my servant Jacob, and **Israel my chosen**,
I call you by your name, I name you, though **you do not know me**.
I am [YHWH], and there is no other, besides me there is no God;
I equip you, though you do not know me,
that people may know, from the rising of the sun and from the west, that there is none besides me;
I am [YHWH], and there is no other.
I form **light** and **create (bara’) darkness**; I make **well-being** and **create (bara’) calamity**;
I am [YHWH], who does all these things.
Shower, O heavens, from above, and **let the clouds rain down righteousness**;
let the earth open, **that salvation and righteousness may bear fruit**;
let the earth cause them both to sprout;
I [YHWH] have created (bara’) it. (Isaiah 45:4-8 ESV)

Those comprising the New Israel will be called, “**I call you**”. The purpose of the New Israel is to teach the world the Way of God, “**that people may know**”, and come to “**salvation and righteousness**”. The world will be coming out of the “**darkness**” and “**calamity**” of the Great Tribulation.³⁶ God will bring “**light**” and “**well being**” to the world through the New Israel.³⁷

King David emphasizes one other vital aspect of God’s creating – **conversion**:

Create (bara’) in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.
Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. (Psalm 51:10-11 ESV)

The New Testament Church is the “mother” of **those called to conversion by God**:

But the **Jerusalem above** is free, and she **is our mother**. For it is written,
Rejoice, O barren one who does not bear;
break forth and cry aloud, you who are not in labor!
For the children of the desolate one will be more than those of the one who has a husband.
(Galatians 4:26-27 ESV quoting Isaiah 54:1)

But you have come to Mount Zion and to **the city of the living God**, the **heavenly Jerusalem**, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to **the assembly of the firstborn** who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and **to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant** ... (Hebrews 12:22-24a ESV)

The purpose of the Church is to provide a spiritually safe home for those called to salvation by God.

The quote in Galatians above is from Isaiah chapter fifty-four verse one. The rest of chapter fifty-four deals with YHWH’s relationship with the Servant, the continuum of Israel, the New Testament Church,

³⁵ This is discussed in more detail in section **2.4.5.2 The New Israel** in the paper “**Second Pillar - The Plan of God**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

³⁶ See Daniel 12:1, Mark 13:19, Matthew 24:21, Revelation 7:14

³⁷ See also, for example, Isaiah 4:5-6, 41:17-20, 43:6-7, 57:18-19, 65:17-18, Psalm 102:16-18

and the Church in the World Tomorrow. The chapter ends with God's promise to **"create weapons"** whereby **those called will defeat "the enemy"**:

Behold, **I have created (bara') the smith who** blows the fire of coals and **produces a weapon** for its purpose.
I have also created (bara') the ravager³⁸ to destroy;
no weapon that is fashioned against you shall succeed,
and **you shall refute every tongue that rises against you** in judgment.
This is the heritage of the servants of [YHWH]
and their vindication from me, declares [YHWH]. (Isaiah 54:16-17 ESV)

The Prophet Jeremiah records YHWH's looking to this role of the Church's protecting those called to the New Israel in the World Tomorrow:

Set up road markers for yourself; make yourself guideposts;
consider well the highway, the road by which you went.
Return, O virgin Israel, return to these your cities.
How long will you waver, O faithless daughter?
For [YHWH] has created (bara') a new thing on the earth: **a woman encircles a man**.
(Jeremiah 31:21-22 ESV)

To summarize, **God's power as Creator has been manifested in the following ways:**

- The creation of **the universe**
- The re-creation of the surface of the earth as **a home for human beings**
- The ongoing **sustenance of the universe**
- The creation of **the Sabbath** as the cornerstone of the Way of God
- The creation of **the Nation of Israel** as a covenant people to serve God
- The careful creation of **the Plan of God** and its execution
- The creation of **a path to salvation** for human beings through conversion
- The establishment of **the Church** as a safe home for True Worshipers

1.2.2 God is the Giver of Life

God's most important creation is "human beings" – living, intelligent beings, created in the image of God with the potential to join the God Family and inhabit eternity with God. However, not only human beings, but **all life has its origin with God:**

And God said, "**Let the earth sprout vegetation**, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, on the earth." **And it was so**. The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind. And God saw that **it was good**.

And God said, "**Let the waters swarm with swarms of living (hay) creatures**, and **let birds fly** above the earth across the expanse of the heavens." So **God created (bara') the great sea creatures and every living (hayah) creature that moves**, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. And God blessed them, saying, "**Be fruitful and multiply** and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth."

And God said, "**Let the earth bring forth living creatures (hay) according to their kinds**—livestock and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds." And it was so. And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the livestock according to their kinds, and everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind. And God saw that **it was good**.
(Genesis 1:11-12, 20-22, 24-25 ESV)

In addition to physical life, **God has also created spirit life**, angelic beings:

Praise him, **all his angels**; ... For he commanded and they **were created (bara')**. (Psalm 148:2a, 5b ESV)
On the day that you were created (bara') they were prepared.
You were **an anointed guardian cherub**.
I placed you; you were on the holy mountain of God; in the midst of the stones of fire you walked.
You were blameless in your ways **from the day you were created (bara')** ... (Ezekiel 28:13b-15a ESV)

God's purpose in creating life is to recreate himself – to have children, to have a Family. This is discussed in detail in section **2.1 The Family of God** in the paper, **"Second Pillar - The Plan of God"**,

³⁸ The Hebrew word is מַשְׁחִית - mash'hith, "destroyer", see Exodus 12:13,23, where it is used as the "agency of God" in the initial Passover.
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located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca. The physical creation, and all other life forms, were created to serve this purpose:

Then God said, **“Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”**

So God created (bara’) man in his own image, in the image of God **he created (bara’) him; male and female he created (bara’) them.** And God blessed them. And God said to them, **“Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it ...”** (Genesis 1:26-28a ESV)³⁹

Human life is made possible by the “breath” of God:

... then [YHWH] God formed the man of dust from the ground and **breathed (naphah)⁴⁰ into his nostrils the breath (n’shamah)⁴¹ of life**, and the **man became a living (hay) creature.** (Genesis 2:7 ESV)

Thus says God, [YHWH],

who created (bara’) the heavens and stretched them out,
who spread out the earth and what comes from it,

who **gives breath (n’shamah) to the people** on it and **spirit (ruah) to those who walk** in it:
(Isaiah 42:5 ESV)

Human life is inherently temporary:

Remember **how short my time is!**

For **what vanity you have created (bara’) all the children of man!**

What man can live and never see death?

Who can deliver his [life] from the power of [the grave]? (Psalm 89:47-48 ESV)

Remember also your Creator (bara’) in the days of your youth,

before the evil days come and the years draw near of which you will say, “I have no pleasure in them”;
(Ecclesiastes 12:1 ESV)

The purpose of our temporary human life is to learn the Way of God. This is discussed more fully in section **3.1 Living by the Way of God** in the paper, **“Third Pillar - The Way of God”**, located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

God has put into human beings a **“human spirit”** which give us intelligence and an innate desire to seek God. This is discussed more fully in section **2.1.2 The Nature of Man** in the paper, **“Second Pillar - The Plan of God”**, located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

God’s objective in creating life is to offer salvation to each and every human being. This is discussed more fully in section **2.2 Salvation** in the paper, **“Second Pillar - The Plan of God”**, located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

1.2.3 God is the Source of Salvation

The root verb **יָשָׁא** - yasha` carries a range of meaning including “save”, “be saved”, “deliver”, “be delivered”. The main derived nouns are **יֵשָׁא** - yesha`, masculine; **יְשׁוּאָה** - yeshu`ah, feminine; and **תְּשׁוּאָה** - teshu`ah, feminine; all carry a similar range of meaning including “salvation” and “deliverance”.⁴² These words occur hundreds of times in the Old Testament. There is nothing inherently “spiritual” in these words. They can be used for purely physical salvation/deliverance by purely human agency, for example:

Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters, and they came and drew water and filled the troughs to water their father’s flock. The shepherds came and drove them away, but **Moses stood up and saved (yasha`) them**, and watered their flock. (Exodus 2:16-17 ESV)

I have seen the fool taking root, but suddenly I cursed his dwelling.

His children are far from safety (yesha`);

they are crushed in the gate, and **there is no one to deliver (natzal)⁴³ them.** (Job 5:3-4 ESV)

³⁹ See also Genesis 5:1-2, 6:7, Deuteronomy 4:32, Isaiah 45:12, Malachi 2:10

⁴⁰ Hebrew **נָפַח** - naphah, verb, “to blow”, “to breathe”; see **TWOT** article 1390 page 586.

⁴¹ Hebrew **נְשָׁמָה** n’shamah, feminine noun, “breath”; see **TWOT** article 1433a page 605.

⁴² See **TWOT** article 929 pages 414-416; the hiphil participle, **מוֹשִׁיָּע** - moshia`, is sometimes taken as a noun, see Holladay page 188.

⁴³ Hebrew **נָצַל** - natzal, a less common synonym of yasha`, “deliver”, see Holladay page 244

When Joab saw that the battle was set against him ... he said, "If the [Arameans] are too strong for me, then you shall help (y^eshu`ah) me, but if the Ammonites are too strong for you, then I will come and help (yasha`) you. (2 Samuel 10:9a, 11 ESV)

And they said to the messengers who had come, "Thus shall you say to the men of Jabesh-gilead: 'Tomorrow, by the time the sun is hot, you shall have salvation (t^eshu`ah).'" When the messengers came and told the men of Jabesh, they were glad. (1 Samuel 11:9 ESV)

However, in the vast majority of the usages of these words, God is the agent of salvation. In the Old Testament, salvation is frequently physical deliverance from a real enemy or threat. The salvation can be a direct action by God, for example:

When Pharaoh drew near, the people of Israel lifted up their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them, and they feared greatly. And the people of Israel cried out to [YHWH]. ... And Moses said to the people, "Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation (y^eshu`ah) of [YHWH], which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. [YHWH] will fight for you, and you have only to be silent." ... Thus [YHWH] saved (yasha`) Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. (Exodus 14:10, 13-14, 30 ESV)

Frequently, God worked through a human agent to secure deliverance, for example:

Then [YHWH] raised up judges, who saved (yasha`) them out of the hand of those who plundered them. ... Whenever [YHWH] raised up judges for them, [YHWH] was with the judge, and he saved (yasha`) them from the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge. (Judges 2:16, 18 ESV)

And [YHWH] turned to [Gideon] and said, "Go in this might of yours and save (yasha`) Israel from the hand of Midian; do not I send you?" And he said to him, "Please, Lord, how can I save (yasha`) Israel? Behold, my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house." And [YHWH] said to him, "But I will be with you, and you shall strike the Midianites as one man." (Judges 6:14-16 ESV)

Some usages of the words imply that God provides salvation, but the recipient must perform some action such as "fighting", "praying", "repenting", "waiting"; for example:

Jonathan said to the young man who carried his armor, "Come, let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised. It may be that [YHWH] will work for us, for nothing can hinder [YHWH] from saving (yasha`) by many or by few." (1 Samuel 14:6 ESV)

[YHWH] is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer (palat),⁴⁴

my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge,

my shield, and the horn of my salvation (yasha`), my stronghold and my refuge,

my savior (yasha`); you save me (yasha`) from violence.

I call upon [YHWH], who is worthy to be praised, and I am saved (yasha`) from my enemies.

(2 Samuel 22:2-4 ESV // Psalm 18:2-3)

In you, [YHWH], do I take refuge; let me never be put to shame!

In your righteousness deliver (natzal) me and rescue me;

incline your ear to me, and save (yasha`) me!

Be to me a rock of refuge, to which I may continually come;

you have given the command to save (yasha`) me, for you are my rock and my fortress.

(Psalm 71:1-3 ESV)

Therefore thus says [YHWH]:

If you return, I will restore you, and you shall stand before me.

If you utter what is precious, and not what is worthless, you shall be as my mouth.

They shall turn to you, but you shall not turn to them.

And I will make you to this people a fortified wall of bronze;

they will fight against you, but they shall not prevail over you,

for I am with you to save (yasha`) you and deliver (natzal) you,

declares [YHWH]. (Jeremiah 15:19-20 ESV)

For thus said the Lord [YHWH], the Holy One of Israel,

"In returning and rest you shall be saved (yasha`);

in quietness and in trust shall be your strength." (Isaiah 30:15a SV)

[YHWH] is good to those who wait for him, to the [person] who seeks him.

It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation (t^eshu`ah) of [YHWH].

(Lamentations 3:25-26 ESV)

⁴⁴ This is from פָּלַט - palat, a less common synonym of yasha` for "deliver"; see Holladay page 292
Monday, March 11, 2024

There are three Greek words used in the New Testament related to “salvation”:⁴⁵

- σωτήρ - sōtēr, a masculine noun occurring 24 times, meaning “deliverer” or “Saviour”, usually used as an epithet for Jesus Christ or God the Father
- σωτηρία - sōtēria, a feminine noun occurring 45 times, meaning “salvation”, “deliverance”, “preservation”
- σωτήριος - sōtērios, an adjective occurring 5 times, meaning “saving”, “delivering”, “preserving” “bringing salvation”

Almost all of the occurrences of these words in the New Testament apply to “**spiritual salvation**”. The concept of “salvation” is discussed in section **2.2 Salvation** in the paper, “**Second Pillar - The Plan of God**”, located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca. The objective of the current section is to examine **God as the source of salvation**.

Jesus Christ⁴⁶ is unanimously acclaimed as the “bringer of salvation”, the Saviour:

And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. And **the angel said to them**, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is **born this day in the city of David a Savior (sōtēr)**, who is **Christ the Lord**. ...” (Luke 2:9-11 ESV)

... he raised up David to be their king, of whom he testified and said, ‘I have found in David the son of Jesse a man after my heart, who will do all my will.’ Of this man’s offspring **God has brought to Israel a Savior (sōtēr), Jesus**, as he promised. (Acts 13:22b-23 ESV)

... **Christ is the head of the church**, his body, **and is himself its Savior (sōtēr)**. (Ephesians 5:23b ESV)

But **grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior (sōtēr) Jesus Christ**. (2 Peter 3:18a ESV)

Ultimately God the Father⁴⁷ is the “Saviour”, the source of salvation through Jesus Christ:

By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and testify that **the Father has sent his Son** to be **the Savior (sōtēr) of the world**. (1 John 4:13-14 ESV)

The **God** of our fathers **raised Jesus ... God exalted him** at his right hand **as Leader and Savior (sōtēr)**, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. (Acts 5:30a, 31 ESV)

This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of **God our Savior (sōtēr)**, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For **there is one God**, and there is **one mediator** between God and men, the man **Christ Jesus** ... (1 Timothy 2:3-5 ESV)

... at the proper time manifested in his word through the preaching with which I have been entrusted by the command of **God our Savior (sōtēr)** ... Grace and peace **from God the Father** and **Christ Jesus our Savior (sōtēr)**. (Titus 1:3, 4b ESV)

But when the goodness and loving kindness of **God our Savior (sōtēr)** appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, [which] he poured out on us richly **through Jesus Christ our Savior (sōtēr)** ... (Titus 3:4-6 ESV)

Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, **to the only God, our Savior (sōtēr), through Jesus Christ our Lord**, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen (Jude 24-25 ESV)

Throughout its history, God provided physical deliverance, salvation, to the nation of Israel and to individuals within the nation. Some, such as King David, also came to knowledge of spiritual salvation. The New Testament focusses almost entirely on spiritual salvation making it abundantly clear that **God the Father is the source of salvation through Jesus Christ**.

1.3 Where is God?

The **seminal scripture** on the location of God is from the **Prophet Isaiah**:

For thus says **the One** who is high and lifted up,
who inhabits eternity (‘ad), whose name is Holy:
“I dwell in the high and holy place,
and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit,
to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of the contrite. ...” (Isaiah 57:15 ESV)

⁴⁵ See GEL pages 808-809

⁴⁶ See also John 4:42, Philippians 3:20, 2 Timothy 1:10, Titus 2:13, 2 Peter 1:1,11, 2:20, 3:2

⁴⁷ See also Luke 1:47, 1 Timothy 1:1, 4:10, Titus 2:11

Most often the words for “eternity” have temporal sense, but **here, `ad is clearly spatial** – it is the “location” in which God dwells, “**the high and holy place**”. The second part of the verse deals with God’s relationship with True Worshipers – this is discussed further in section **2.1 The Family of God** in the paper, “**Second Pillar - The Plan of God**”, located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca. With respect to “eternity”, **the “spatial” and the “temporal” merge** to some degree, for example:

[YHWH] will reign **forever (`olam) and ever (`ad)**. (Exodus 15:18 ESV)

[YHWH] is king **forever (`olam) and ever (`ad)**... (Psalm 10:16a ESV)

Your throne, O God, is **forever (`olam) and ever (`ad)**. (Psalm 45:6a ESV)

Before the mountains were brought forth,
or ever you had formed the earth and the world,
from everlasting (`olam) to everlasting (`olam) you are God.
(Psalm 90:2 ESV; see also 103:17, 106:48)

The Hebrew words, עַד - `ad and עוֹלָם - `olam, carry as similar range of meaning “**indefinite time**”. Context must be considered to determine when the concept of “eternity”, either spatial or temporal, is the meaning.⁴⁸

“Time” is a function of the relative motion of planets and stars. “**Before**” the physical creation, **there was no “time”** – no concept of “temporality”. **In “eternity”, “time” does NOT exist.** “Time” is a property of the physical creation – it is observable, within the physical creation, from “eternity”, which is how God can see the **“end from the beginning”**:

... I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me,
declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done ...
(Isaiah 46:9b-10a ESV; see also 41:26, 48:3-8)

1.3.1 What is “Eternity”?

As discussed in section **1.1.1 God is Spirit**, **there is a vast gulf between “spirit” and “matter”**. The entire physical universe is, to God, just an object he can hold in his hand:

Who has measured the waters **in the hollow of his hand** and **marked off the heavens with a span**,
enclosed the dust of the earth in a measure
and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance? (Isaiah 40:12 ESV)

We cannot determine how God did it, but **all that is physical was brought into existence out of “nothing”**:

By faith we understand that **the universe was created by the word of God**, so **that what is seen was NOT made out of things that are visible**. (Hebrews 11:3 ESV)

... in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and **calls into existence the things that do not exist**. (Romans 4:17b ESV)

“Eternity” is therefore the realm in which God exists which is outside of the physical universe. The physical universe is a created object which exists within “eternity”. Other figurative expressions used to describe “eternity” frequently use the word שָׁמַיִם - shamayim, a masculine noun which is always plural in form.⁴⁹ **The word carries two distinct ranges of meaning**: first, the sky in relation to the earth and everything above it in the physical creation, i.e., the planets, stars, galaxies, and all other components of the universe; secondly, the abode of God, i.e., “eternity”.

Moses is explicit that **eternity is distinct from the physical creation**:

... know therefore today, and lay it to your heart, that **[YHWH] is God in heaven (shamayim) above and on the earth beneath**; there is no other. ... (Deuteronomy 4:39 ESV)

Behold, to [YHWH] your God belong **heaven (shamayim)** and the **heaven (shamayim) of heavens (shamayim)**, the earth with all that is in it.
(Deuteronomy 10:14 ESV; see also 1 Kings 8:27 // 2 Chronicles 6:18, 2 Chronicles 2:6, Nehemiah 9:6)

⁴⁸ See **TWOT** article 1565a pages 645-646 and article 1631a pages 672 and 673

⁴⁹ See **BDB** pages 1029-1030, **TWOT** article 2407a pages 935-936

The phrase “**heaven of heavens**” is a superlative which references “eternity” – it is **distinct from the physical creation**, “heaven ... the earth with all that is in it”. Moses is also explicit that “**eternity**” is the **abode of God**:

Look down from **your holy habitation**,⁵⁰ from **heaven (shamayim)**, and bless your people Israel ... (Deuteronomy 26:15 ESV; see also 1 Kings 8:30, 39, 43, 49 // 2 Chronicles 6:21, 30, 33, 39)

Prayers are directed to God in “eternity”.⁵¹

Then **Hezekiah** the king and **Isaiah** the prophet, the son of Amoz, **prayed** because of this and **cried to heaven (shamayim)**. (2 Chronicles 32:20)

And in the time of their suffering **they cried** out to you and **you heard them from heaven (shamayim)**, and according to your great mercies you gave them saviors who saved them from the hand of their enemies. ... Yet when **they turned and cried** to you, **you heard from heaven (shamayim)**, and many times you delivered them according to your mercies. (Nehemiah 9:27b, 28b ESV)

O my God, **I am ashamed and blush to lift my face to you**, my God, for our iniquities have risen higher than our heads, and **our guilt has mounted up to the heavens (shamayim)**. (Ezra 9:6 ESV)

Job looks to God in “eternity” to clear him of the curse he has incurred:

There is **no arbiter** between us, who might lay his hand on us both.

But **I would speak to the Almighty**, and I desire to argue my case with God.

Even now, behold, **my witness is in heaven (shamayim)**, and he who testifies for me is **on high**. (Job 9:33, 13:3, 16:19 ESV)

The Psalms are explicit that **God dwells in “eternity”**.⁵²

[YHWH] has established his **throne in the heavens (shamayim)**, and his kingdom rules over all. (Psalm 103:19 ESV; see also 123:1)

He who **sits in the heavens (shamayim) laughs**; the Lord holds them in derision. (Psalm 2:4 ESV; see also 115:3)

[YHWH] **looks down from heaven (shamayim)** on the children of man, to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God. (Psalm 14:2 ESV; see also 33:13, 53:2, 80:14, 102:19)

God acts from “eternity”.⁵³

O kingdoms of the earth, **sing to God**; sing praises to the Lord.

to him who **rides in the heavens (shamayim)**, **the ancient heavens (shamayim)**; behold, **he sends out his voice**, his mighty voice. (Psalm 68:32-33 ESV)

Now I know that [YHWH] **saves his anointed**;

he will **answer** him **from his holy heaven (shamayim)** with the saving might of his right hand. (Psalm 20:6 ESV see also 57:3)

From the heavens (shamayim) you uttered **judgment (din)**,⁵⁴ the earth feared and was still, when God arose to **establish [justice] (mishpat)**,⁵⁵ **to save** all the humble of the earth. (Psalm 76:8-9 ESV)

Forever, [YHWH], **your word** is firmly fixed **in the heavens (shamayim)**. (Psalm 119:89ESV)

[YHWH] will roar from on high, and from **his holy habitation** utter his voice;

he will roar mightily against his fold,

and shout, like those who tread grapes, against all the inhabitants of the earth.

The clamor will resound to the ends of the earth,

for [YHWH] has an indictment against the nations;

he is entering into judgment (shaphat)⁵⁶ with all flesh, and the wicked he will put to the sword, declares [YHWH].⁵⁷ (Jeremiah 25:30b-31 ESV)

God’s character emanates from “eternity”.⁵⁷

[hesed] will be built up **forever (‘olam)**; **in the heavens (shamayim)** you will establish your **faithfulness**. (Psalm 89:2 ESV see also 36:5, 57:10, 108:4)

⁵⁰ See also Psalm 68:5

⁵¹ See also Lamentations 3:41

⁵² See also Ecclesiastes 5:2, Isaiah 66:1

⁵³ See also Genesis 21:17, 22:11,15, Lamentations 3:50

⁵⁴ The root verb דִּין - din carries a range of meaning “Judge”, “contend”, “plead”; the noun דִּין - din means “judgement”; see TWOT article 426 page 188.

⁵⁵ In this context, *mishpat* is parallel to *din*, so “justice” is the best translation.

⁵⁶ The root verb שָׁפַט - shaphat is the most common word for “judge”, “govern”; see TWOT article 2443 pages 947-948.

⁵⁷ See also Psalms 111:3, 112:3,9

Look down from heaven (shamayim) and see, from **your** holy and beautiful **habitation**.

Where are your **zeal** and your **might**?

The stirring of your inner parts and your **compassion** are held back from me. (Isaiah 63:15 ESV)

God came to be known by **an epithet** identifying him with “eternity”, **the God of heaven**:

And he said to them, “I am a Hebrew, and **I fear [YHWH], the God of heaven (shamayim)**, who made the sea and the dry land.” (Jonah 1:9 ESV)

Give thanks to **the God of heaven (shamayim)**, for his [hesed] endures forever (‘olam).

(Psalm 136:26 ESV)

Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, ‘[YHWH], **the God of heaven (shamayim)**, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem ...

(2 Chronicles 36:23a ESV // Ezra 1:2)

As soon as I heard these words I sat down and wept and mourned for days, and I continued fasting and **praying** before **the God of heaven (shamayim)**. And I said, “[YHWH] **God of heaven (shamayim)**, the great and awesome God who keeps covenant and [hesed] with those who love him and keep his commandments ... (Nehemiah 1:4-5 ESV see also 2:4, 20)

The abode of God is “eternity”. The physical universe is an object within eternity. All that is physical was created by God out of “nothing”, i.e., before the creation there was “nothing” physical.

1.3.2 Glimpses into Eternity

The “spirit world” is NOT directly observable from the physical world. As physical human beings, we cannot directly observe God, as he really is in spirit, **“in his glory”**:

Moses said, “Please **show me your glory**.” And he said, “I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name ‘[YHWH].’ And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. But,” he said, **“you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live.”** (Exodus 33:18-20 ESV)

However, on **multiple occasions God has opened a window into eternity** and allowed human beings to observe certain activities. **There is no information as to HOW this is done**. It may be purely a visionary experience. It may be a manifestation representing actualities in eternity. It may be done through some kind of filtering. **Clearly God is able to do things in ways we cannot understand**.

King David is clear that he understood there to be **a throne room of God in a spiritual temple in eternity**.⁵⁸

[YHWH] is in **his holy temple**; [YHWH’s] **throne is in heaven (shamayim)**;

In my distress I called upon [YHWH]; to my God I cried for help.

From his temple he heard my voice, and my cry to him reached his ears.

One thing have I asked of [YHWH], that will I seek after:

that I may dwell in the house of [YHWH] all the days of my life,
to gaze upon the beauty of [YHWH] and **to inquire in his temple**.

Hear the voice of my pleas for mercy, when I cry to you for help,
when I lift up my hands toward **your most holy sanctuary**.

(Psalms 11:4a, 18:6, 27:4, 28:2 ESV)

The Apostle John describes how he saw **the throne of God in eternity**:

After this I looked, and behold, **a door standing open in heaven!** And **the first voice**,⁵⁹ which I had heard **speaking to me like a trumpet**, said, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.”

At once **I was in the Spirit**, and behold, **a throne stood in heaven**, with **one seated on the throne**. And **he who sat there** had the appearance of jasper and carnelian, and around the throne was a rainbow that had the appearance of an emerald.

Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and seated on the thrones were twenty-four elders, clothed in white garments, with golden crowns on their heads. From the throne came flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder, and before the throne were burning seven torches of fire, which are the seven spirits of God, and **before the throne there was as it were a sea of glass, like crystal**.

And around the throne, on each side of the throne, are **four living creatures**, full of eyes in front and behind: the first living creature like a **lion**, the second living creature like an **ox**, the third living creature with the face of a **man**, and the fourth living creature like an **eagle** in flight. And the four living creatures,

⁵⁸ Note that David cannot be referencing the physical temple since it was not yet built. For a discussion of David’s desire to build the Temple, his moving the Ark in preparation, and his provisions for the Tabernacle and the Temple, see the paper “**David – A Man After My Own Heart**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

⁵⁹ The “first voice” is Jesus Christ in resurrected glory, see Revelation 1:10-18.

each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night they never cease to say,

“Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!”

And whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to him who is seated on the throne, who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before him who is seated on the throne and worship him who lives forever and ever, saying,

“Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.”

(Revelation 4:1-11 ESV see also 1:4, 3:21, 5:1-14, 6:16, 7:9-17, 8:3, 11:16, 12:5, 14:2-3, 16:17, 19:4-5)

Moses, and the others, had **caught a glimpse of this throne** after the Covenant Ratification ceremony: Then Moses and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up, and **they saw the God of Israel**. There was under his feet as it were **a pavement of sapphire stone, like the very heaven for clearness**. And he did not lay his hand on the chief men of the people of Israel; **they beheld God**, and ate and drank. (Exodus 24:9-11 ESV)

Similarly, the **Prophet Isaiah** describes what he experienced:

... **I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne**, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled **the temple**. Above him stood the **seraphim**. **Each had six wings**: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said:

“Holy, holy, holy is [YHWH] of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!”

And the foundations of the thresholds shook at **the voice of him who called**, and the house was filled with smoke. And I said: “Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for **my eyes have seen the King, [YHWH] of hosts!**” Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth and said: “Behold, this has touched your lips; **your guilt is taken away**, and **your sin atoned for**.” (Isaiah 6:1b-7 ESV)

Since John hears Jesus speaking to him, the **“one seated on the throne”**, whom he sees, must be **God the Father**. Moses does not mention the “throne” but does appear to have seen the **“sea of glass”**, **“a pavement of sapphire stone”**. The **“God of Israel”** probably refers to YHWH, Jesus Christ, NOT God the Father. Isaiah sees the throne, the **“four living creatures”**, the **“seraphim”**, and he clearly identifies the one on the throne as **“the King, [YHWH] of hosts”**, YHWH, Jesus Christ, NOT God the Father. The appearance of **both Jesus Christ and God the Father in the throne room in eternity** is to be expected:

Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who **is at the right hand of God**, who indeed is interceding for us. (Romans 8:34b ESV see also Ephesians 1:20, Colossians 3:1)

He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, **he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high** ... (Hebrews 1:3 ESV see also 1:13, 8:1, 10:12)

... looking to **Jesus**, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and **is seated at the right hand of the throne of God**. (Hebrews 12:2 ESV)

... **Jesus Christ**, who **has gone into heaven** and is **at the right hand of God**, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him. (1 Peter 3:21bβ-22 ESV)

And now, Father, **glorify me in your own presence** with **the glory that I had with you before the world existed**. (John 17:5 ESV)

Daniel is clear that he sees both God the Father and **“the son of man”**, Jesus Christ, YHWH, in the throne room in eternity:

As I looked,

thrones were placed, and **the Ancient of Days took his seat**; his clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames; **its wheels were burning fire**.

A **stream of fire** issued and came out from before him; a thousand thousands **served him**, and ten thousand times ten thousand **stood before him**; **the court sat in judgment**, and the books were opened.

I saw in the night visions,

and behold, **with the clouds of heaven** there came **one like a son of man**, and he **came to the Ancient of Days** and was **presented before him**.⁶⁰ And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom,

⁶⁰ See John 20:17

that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him;
his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away,
and **his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed**. (Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14 ESV)

That the **“thrones were placed”** may be related to the same event as John saw when **“they cast their crowns before the throne”**.⁶¹ The **Ancient of Days** is clearly God the Father. The “son of man” is Jesus Christ in his human incarnation.⁶² The **Martyr Stephen** explicitly identifies “the Son of Man” as the resurrected, glorified, Jesus Christ on the throne of God in eternity:

But he, **full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God**. And he said, “Behold, I see the heavens opened, and **the Son of Man** standing at the right hand of God.” (Acts 7:55-56 ESV)

Note that Daniel observes that **“the court sat in judgment”** before the throne of God. Two Psalmists describe similar scenes from the throne room in eternity:

God has taken his place in **the divine council**;
in the midst of the [‘elohim]⁶³ he holds judgment:

Let the heavens (shamayim) praise your wonders, O LORD,
your faithfulness in **the assembly of the holy ones!**

For who in the skies (shaḥaq)⁶⁴ can be compared to [YHWH]?

Who among the [‘elim]⁶⁵ is like [YHWH], ⁶⁶God, greatly to be feared in **the council of the holy ones**,
and awesome above **all who are around him?**

(Psalms 82:1, 89:5-7 ESV)

The **“divine council”** in the throne room in the temple in eternity is also the setting of the background to the **Book of Job**:

Now there was a day when **the sons of God** came to **present themselves before [YHWH]**, and Satan⁶⁷ also came among them. [YHWH] said to Satan, “From where have you come?” Satan answered [YHWH] and said, “From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it.” And [YHWH] said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?”

Again there was a day when **the sons of God** came to **present themselves before [YHWH]**, and Satan also came among them to **present himself before [YHWH]**. And [YHWH] said to Satan, “From where have you come?” Satan answered [YHWH] and said, “From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it.” And [YHWH] said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil? He still holds fast his integrity, although you incited me against him to destroy him without reason.” (Job 1:6-8, 2:1-3 ESV)

The **Prophet Micaiah** was privileged to observe a similar scene **in the throne room** in eternity:

And **Micaiah** said, “Therefore hear the word of [YHWH]: **I saw [YHWH] sitting on his throne**, and all the **host of heaven** standing **beside him** on his right hand and on his left; and [YHWH] said, ‘Who will entice Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead?’ And one said one thing, and another said another.

“Then a spirit (ruaḥ) came forward and stood before [YHWH], saying, ‘I will entice him.’ And [YHWH] said to him, ‘By what means?’ And he said, ‘I will go out, and will be a lying spirit (ruaḥ) in the mouth of all his prophets.’ And he said, ‘You are to entice him, and you shall succeed; go out and do so.’

“Now therefore behold, [YHWH] has put a lying spirit (ruaḥ) in the mouth of all these your prophets; [YHWH] has declared disaster for you.” (1 Kings 22:19-23 ESV // 2 Chronicles 18:18-22)

The **Prophet Ezekiel** saw **the throne of God**, although NOT in the temple in eternity:

... I was among the exiles by the Chebar canal, **the heavens were opened**, and **I saw visions of God**. ... As I looked, behold, a stormy wind came out of the north, and a great cloud, with brightness around it, and **fire flashing forth continually**, and in the midst of the fire, as it were gleaming metal. And from the midst of it came the likeness of **four living creatures**. ... As for the likeness of their faces, each had a **human face**. The four had the **face of a lion** on the right side, the four had the **face of an ox** on the left side, and

⁶¹ These “thrones” may be symbolic of the thrones to be taken up by resurrected saints at the First Resurrection; See Revelation 1:6, 3:11,21, 5:9-10, 11:16-17, 20:4,6.

⁶² Jesus refers to himself by this epithet dozens of times as reported by the Gospel authors; for example, Matthew 8:20, Mark 2:10, Luke 6:22, John 3:13.

⁶³ See the discussion of ‘elohim in section **2.1.1 The Family Name** in the paper, “**Second Pillar - The Way of God**”, located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

⁶⁴ This is שָׁחַק - shaḥaq, a lesser used synonym of *shamayim*, see **BDB** page 1007.

⁶⁵ Literally, “Gods”, i.e., members of the God Family.

⁶⁶ The **ESV** translator supplies the indefinite article at this point, but the sense is better without it: “God” is in apposition to YHWH.

⁶⁷ The Hebrew is שָׂטָן - hassatan, “the adversary”, who is “Satan”; see **ESV** footnote.

the four had the **face of an eagle**. ... Over the heads of the living creatures there was **the likeness of an expanse**, shining like **awe-inspiring crystal**, spread out above their heads. ... And above the expanse over their heads there was **the likeness of a throne**, in appearance like sapphire; and **seated** above the likeness of a throne was **a likeness with a human appearance**. (Ezekiel 1:1b, 4-5a, 10, 22, 26 ESV)

The **Apostle Paul** was also given a brief glimpse into eternity:

I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was **caught up to the third heaven**—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows. And I know that this man was **caught up into paradise**—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows—and **he heard things that cannot be told**, which man may not utter. (2 Corinthians 12:2-4 ESV)

The “spirit realm” in eternity is very real. Many people have been granted a brief view of it. When God is ready, **God will give all humanity a brief terrifying glimpse at his throne:**

When he opened **the sixth seal**, I looked, and behold ... **The sky vanished** like a scroll that is being rolled up ... Then the **kings** of the earth and the **great ones** and the **generals** and the rich and the powerful, and **everyone**, slave and free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, calling to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and **hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne**, and from **the wrath of the Lamb**, for **the great day of their wrath has come**, and who can stand?” (Revelation 6:12a, 14a, 15-17 ESV)

1.3.3 The Omnipresence of God

It follows naturally that God “is everywhere” within the physical creation. From eternity all parts of the physical creation are equally accessible to God. Are there **“spiritual monitoring systems”** that alert God to various conditions of the physical creation? Such a thing may be hinted at in the **Book of Zechariah**:

I saw in the night, and behold, **a man riding on a red horse**! He was standing among the myrtle trees in the glen, and behind him were red, sorrel, and white horses. Then I said, **“What are these, my lord?”** The angel who talked with me said to me, ‘I will show you what they are.’ So the man who was standing among the myrtle trees answered, **“These are they whom [YHWH] has sent to patrol the earth.”** And they answered the angel of [YHWH] who was standing among the myrtle trees, and said, **“We have patrolled the earth, and behold, all the earth remains at rest.”** (Zechariah 1:8-11 ESV)

In dealing with “false prophets”, YHWH gave the **Prophet Jeremiah** some instruction which can only be understood within the concept of “eternity”:

Thus **says [YHWH] of hosts**: “Do not listen to the words of **the prophets** who prophesy to you, filling you with vain hopes. They **speak visions of their own minds**, not from the mouth of [YHWH]. ... For **who among them has stood in the council of [YHWH]** to see and to hear his word, or who has paid attention to his word and listened? ... But **if they had stood in my council**, then they would have proclaimed my words to my people ...

Am I a God at hand, declares [YHWH], and not a God far away? **Can a man hide himself** in secret places so that I cannot see him? declares [YHWH]. **Do I not fill heaven (shamayim) and earth?** declares [YHWH]. (Jeremiah 23:16, 18, 22a, 23-24 ESV)

In the previous section, there were examples of God providing access for “true prophets” to the divine council in eternity. The “false prophets” think that God is not aware of the fallacy of their false preaching, but there is no possibility of their hiding. God **“fills heaven and earth”**, he has immediate access to all goings-on.

King David and **a later Psalmist** aptly describe the omnipresence of God:

Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or **where shall I flee from your presence?**
If I ascend to heaven (shamayim), you are there! If I make my bed in [a grave], **you are there!**
If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me.
If I say, “Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light about me be night,”
even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is bright as the day,
for darkness is as light with you. (Psalm 139:7-12 ESV)

[YHWH] is high above all nations, and **his glory above the heavens (shamayim)!**
Who is like [YHWH] our God, **who is seated on high**,
who looks far down on the heavens (shamayim) and the earth? (Psalm 113:4-6 ESV)

King Solomon, at the dedication of the Temple, expresses his understanding of the omnipresence of God:

Then Solomon stood before the altar of [YHWH] in the presence of all the assembly of Israel and spread out his hands toward heaven (shamayim), and said, “[YHWH], God of Israel, **there is no God like you, in heaven (shamayim) above or on earth beneath** ... But **will God indeed dwell on the earth?** Behold, **heaven (shamayim) and the highest heaven (shamayim) cannot contain you**; how much less this house that I have built! Yet have regard to the prayer of your servant and to his plea, [YHWH] my God, listening to the cry and to the prayer that your servant prays before you this day, that **your eyes may be open night and day toward this house**, the place of which you have said, **‘My name shall be there’** ... (1 Kings 8:22-23a, 27-29a ESV // 2 Chronicles 6:12, 14a, 18-20a; see also 2 Chronicles 2:5-6)

The **Prophet Isaiah** echoes and elaborates the words of Solomon:

Thus says [YHWH]:

Heaven (shamayim) is my throne, and the earth is my footstool;
what is the house that you would build for me, and what is the place of my rest?

All these things my hand has made, and so all these things came to be, declares [YHWH].⁶⁸

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares [YHWH].

For as the heavens (shamayim) are higher than the earth,

so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. (Isaiah 66:1-2a, 55:8-9ESV)

From the throne room in eternity, **God is aware of the status of the entire physical universe**. Yet, God’s main focus remains the working out of his Plan here on earth.

1.3.4 The Purpose of God’s Presence

Oh that you would rend the heavens (shamayim) and come down,

that the mountains might quake at your presence (paneḥ)—

as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil—,

to make your name known to your adversaries,

and **that the nations might tremble** at your presence (paneḥ)!

When you did awesome things that we did not look for,

you came down, **the mountains quaked at your presence (paneḥ)**.

From of old no one has heard or perceived by the ear,

no eye has seen a God besides you, **who acts for those who wait for him**. (Isaiah 64:1-4 ESV)

Isaiah pleads for the Second Advent, “**rend the heavens (shamayim) and come down ... to make your name known to your adversaries**”. He alludes to the theophany at Mount Sinai, “**the mountains quaked at your presence (paneḥ)**”. The Hebrew word פָּנֶה - paneḥ, is most literally translated as “face”, but it carries a range of meaning including “before”, “in front”, “in the presence”.⁶⁹ Isaiah stresses the beneficence of God’s omnipresence, by his “presence, paneḥ”, to “**act for those who wait for him**”. **To be “in the presence” of God, implies being in a relationship with God**. When Adam and Eve were created, God talked directly to them. He gave them instructions on what they were to do – they had a close relationship.⁷⁰ When Adam and Eve sinned, **the relationship was broken**, they attempted to hide, to remove themselves from the presence of God:

And they heard the sound of [YHWH] **God walking in the garden** in the cool of the day, and **the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence (paneḥ) of [YHWH] God** among the trees of the garden. (Genesis 3:8 ESV)

After the Golden Calf incident at Horeb⁷¹ **God at first refused to participate in a relationship with the people of Israel** because they had broken the covenant and were thus “unclean”:

[YHWH] said to Moses, “Depart; go up from here, you and the people whom you have brought up out of the land of Egypt, **to the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob**, saying, ‘To your offspring I will give it.’ **I will send an angel before you**, and I will drive out the Canaanites, the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. Go up to a land flowing with milk and honey; **but I will not go up among you, lest I consume you** on the way, for you are a stiff-necked people.” (Exodus 33:1-3 ESV)

⁶⁸ This passage is quoted by the Martyr Stephen, see Acts 7:48-50

⁶⁹ See Holladay pages 293-294, TWOT article 1782 pages 727-728

⁷⁰ See Genesis 1:28-30, 2:15-25

⁷¹ See Exodus 32:1-35

Moses understood that **a proper relationship with God was essential for Israel to succeed as a nation**, so he pleaded with God to restore the relationship:

Moses said to [YHWH], "... Now therefore, if I have found favor in your sight, **please show me now your ways, that I may know you** in order to find favor in your sight. Consider too that **this nation is your people.**"

And he said, "**My presence (paneḥ) will go with you**, and I will give you rest."

And he said to him, "If your presence (paneḥ) will not go with me, do not bring us up from here. For how shall it be known that I have found favor in your sight, I and your people? Is it not in **your going with us**, so that **we are distinct**, I and your people, from every other people on the face of the earth?"

(Exodus 33:12a, 13-16 ESV)

God acquiesces to Moses' request and agrees to restore the relationship. **Only the presence of God made Israel the people of God.** The **sacrificial system** was then given to Israel as a temporary means to atone for sin. This was necessary so that God could account the nation and individuals within it as being "holy" **making to possible for them to be in his presence.**⁷² This is **an object lesson for True Worshipers** today: a proper relationship with God is required to be in his presence, to be accounted "holy", and to succeed in God's calling.

In one of his last speeches in the Plains of Moab, **Moses assures the people of the presence of God**, and shortly after **God himself reiterates the words to Joshua:**

So Moses continued to speak these words to all Israel. "... **[YHWH] your God himself will go over before you. ... Be strong and courageous.** Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is [YHWH] your God who goes with you. **He will not leave you or forsake you.**" (Deuteronomy 31:1, 3a, 6 ESV)

After the death of Moses the servant of [YHWH], **[YHWH] said to Joshua** the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, "Moses my servant is dead. Now therefore **arise, go over this Jordan**, you and all this people, into the land that I am giving to them, to the people of Israel. ... No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as **I was with Moses**, so **I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you.**⁷³ **Be strong and courageous**, for you shall cause this people to inherit the land that I swore to their fathers to give them. ..." (Joshua 1:1-2, 5-6 ESV)

In the epilogue to Moses' blessing of the tribes of Israel,⁷⁴ the author identifies God as **"the dwelling place"** of those who are **"in God's presence"**:

There is none like **God**, O Jeshurun,⁷⁵ who **rides through the heavens (shamayim) to your help**, through the skies (shaḥaq)⁷⁶ in his majesty. **The eternal⁷⁷ God is your dwelling place**, and underneath are the everlasting ('olam) arms. (Deuteronomy 33:26-27a ESV)

The metaphor of **"the dwelling place"** is taken up in several **Psalms** and in the **New Testament:**

Surely **the righteous** shall give thanks to your name; **the upright** shall **dwelt in your presence (paneḥ).**

Blessed are **those who dwell in your house**, ever ('ad) singing your praise!

Let me dwell in your tent forever ('olam)! Let me **take refuge** under the **shelter** of your wings!

He who **dwells in the shelter** of the Most High will **abide in the shadow of the Almighty.**

Turn away from evil and do good; **so shall you dwell forever ('olam).**

For [YHWH] loves (mish'pat); **he will not forsake his saints.**

They are preserved forever ('olam), but the children of the wicked shall be cut off.

The **righteous** shall inherit the [earth] and **dwelt upon it forever ('ad).**

Surely goodness and [ḥesed]⁷⁸ shall follow me all the days of my life, and **I shall dwell in the house of [YHWH] forever.**⁷⁹

(Psalms 140:13, 84:4, 61:4. 91:1, 37:27-29, 23:6 ESV)

⁷² This topic is discussed in more detail in section **9.3 The Covenant of Performance** and in section **10.1 Efficacy of Sacrifices in the Old Testament**, both in the paper **"True Worship of the True God"** located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

⁷³ This promise is cited by the author of the Book of Hebrews, see Hebrews 13:5

⁷⁴ That this epilogue was appended to Moses' blessing, seems clear from its perspective after the conquest: "And he thrust out the enemy before you and said, 'Destroy.' So Israel lived in safety, Jacob lived alone ..." (Deuteronomy 33:27b-28a).

⁷⁵ "Jeshurun" is an epithet for "Israel", see Deuteronomy 32:15, 33:5, Isaiah 44:2.

⁷⁶ This is שָׁחַק - shaḥaq, a lesser used synonym of *shamayim*, see BDB page 1007.

⁷⁷ This is from קִדְמָה - qedem, a rare masculine noun, which carries a range of meaning including "earlier", "ancient times", "eternal"; see Holladay page 313.

⁷⁸ The English word "mercy" is NOT a correct translation of *ḥesed*. God is love – God's love is defined by *ḥesed*. The closest English translation is **"covenant love"**.

⁷⁹ The Hebrew is לְאֹרֶךְ יָמִים - l'e'orek yamim, literally "to length of days", an idiom for "forever"; see ESV footnote.

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. (Ephesians 2:19-22 ESV)

What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. (cited from Leviticus 26:11a, 12) (2 Corinthians 6:16 ESV)

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. ..." (Revelation 21:3 ESV)

The Apostle John makes it clear that the relationship is one of close family unity – Jesus Christ and God the Father are of one mind and purpose, and it is the Holy Spirit which is the operative power of the relationship:

Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves. ... And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, [which] the world cannot receive, because it neither sees [it] nor knows [it]. You know [it], for [it] dwells with you and will be in you. ..." (John 14:8-11, 16-17 ESV; see also Colossians 1:15-20)

The Apostle Paul elaborates on the functioning of the Holy Spirit:

You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit [which] dwells in you. (Romans 8:9-11 ESV)

Through the power of the Holy Spirit, God the Father and Jesus Christ are in total unity, at one with each other. Those individuals called to be True Worshipers are also at one with God the Father and Jesus Christ through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit – this is discussed further in section [1.5.3 Indwelling of the Holy Spirit](#). The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is the operative principle of the relationship God requires with True Worshipers. God make his presence available to True Worshipers through the Holy Spirit. Through the Holy Spirit True Worshipers have immediate access to God in the throne room in eternity.

[1.4 What is God Like?](#)

God's desire from the beginning has been to have close relationships with the crown of his creation – human beings. We don't know how long Adam and Eve lived in the Garden before they sinned. The exceedingly brief records we have shows that God freely interacted with them and taught them:

[YHWH] God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. And [YHWH] God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden ..."

Now out of the ground [YHWH] God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name.

Then [YHWH] God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." ... So [YHWH] God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that [YHWH] God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man.

And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." And God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. ..." (Genesis 2:15-16, 19, 18, 21-22, 1:28-29 ESV)

Genesis chapters three through eleven recount how early **human beings failed to respond to the love of God**. Only **God's grace** allowed the survival of the human race:

And [YHWH] **regretted that he had made man on the earth**, and it grieved him to his heart. So [YHWH] said, **"I will blot out man** whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them." But **Noah found favor (hen) in the eyes of [YHWH]**.

And [YHWH] said, **"Behold, they are one people**, and they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. And **nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them**." (Genesis 6:6-8, 11:6 ESV)

The masculine noun **הֵן** - *hen*, is derived from the verbal root **חָנַן** - *hanan*, which carries a range of meaning including "be gracious", "show pity", "have compassion". Edwin Yamauchi states:

The verb *hanan* depicts a heartfelt response by someone who has something given to the one who has a need. ... an action from a superior to an inferior who has no real claim for gracious treatment. (TWOT article 694 page 302)

The noun *hen* means "favour", "grace". **Grace is the operative principle of all of God's dealings with human beings**. The human race was created solely by the desire of the Great Creator of the universe to share his creation with other beings who were like him⁸⁰ – his family. The revelation of God's grace to human beings is the story of the whole Bible. This revelation is discussed in detail in the paper **"The Covenants of Grace"** located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca. The purpose of the current section of the current paper is to **explore the character of God starting from the foundation of his grace**.

Genesis chapters twelve through thirty-six discuss the beginning of the working out of the Plan of God – **the revelation by God of his grace** to the Patriarchs starting with Abraham. Genesis chapters thirty-seven through fifty discuss the origin of the Nation of Israel – the vehicle through which, according to his Plan, **God's grace will be carried to all human beings**. The first nineteen chapters of the Book of Exodus describe **the grace of God in extricating the Israelites from Egypt** and the beginning of the Nation of Israel by the Sinai Covenant. Chapter twenty of Exodus contains the revelation of the Ten Commandments – the first teaching under the Sinai Covenant. **The Ten Commandments are the definition of God's grace** – they specify what God requires of those to whom he extends his grace.

Back to Genesis chapter eleven, **"Behold, they are one people ... nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them"**, sadly the human race is now, at the end-time, on the brink of the ultimate fulfillment of this prophecy. There are now weapons, technologies, and ideologies rampant in the world which are capable of the complete destruction of the human race. These forces are in action and will succeed without divine intervention. **Only through the grace of God are we going to survive this crisis at the close of the age:**

For in those days there will be **such tribulation as has not been from the beginning of the creation that God created until now**, and never will be. And if the Lord had not cut short the days, **no human being would be saved**. But **for the sake of the elect**, whom he chose, he shortened the days. (Mark 13:19-20 ESV)

And there shall be **a time of trouble, such as never has been** since there was a nation till that time. But at that time **your people shall be delivered**, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book. (Daniel 12:1b ESV)

Remember the [torah] of my servant Moses ... Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet **before the great and awesome day of [YHWH] comes**. And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, **lest I come and strike the [earth] with a decree of utter destruction**." (Malachi 4:4a, 5-6 ESV)

God has throughout history, through his grace, revealed his character to small numbers of True Worshipers in order to carry out the Plan of God. Now, at the end time, Jesus calls the last members of this group, **"the elect"**. These True Worshipers are fulfilling the final prophecy of Malachi.⁸¹ Jesus Christ will return as King of kings, destroy those who are destroying the earth,⁸² and establish a utopia, a Kingdom which will never be destroyed,⁸³ the wonderful World Tomorrow.⁸⁴

⁸⁰ See Genesis 1:26

⁸¹ For a discussion of this, see the paper **"The Work of Elijah"** located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

⁸² See Revelation 11:18

⁸³ See Daniel 2:44

1.4.1 God is Holy

There is no better definition of “holiness” than **the ninety-ninth Psalm**. The Hebrew word translated “holy” is קָדוֹשׁ - qadosh, a masculine adjective:

[YHWH] reigns; let the peoples tremble!

He sits enthroned upon the cherubim; let the earth quake!

[YHWH] is great in Zion; **he is exalted** over all the peoples.

Let them **praise your great and awesome name!**

Holy (qadosh) is he!

The King in his might loves [justness] (mish^epat). You have established **equity (mesharim)**;

you have executed [justness] (mish^epat) and **righteousness (tz^edaqah)** in Jacob.

Exalt [YHWH] our God; **worship** at his footstool!

Holy (qadosh) is he!

Moses and Aaron were among his priests,

Samuel also was among those who **called upon his name**.

They called to [YHWH], and **he answered them**.

In the pillar of the cloud he spoke to them;

they kept his **testimonies (‘eduth)** and the **statute** that he gave them.

[YHWH] our God, you answered them;

you were **a forgiving (nasa’) God** to them, but **an avenger** of their wrongdoings.

Exalt [YHWH] our God, and **worship** at his holy mountain;

for **[YHWH] our God is holy (qadosh)!** (Psalm 99:1-9 ESV)

The most important attribute of “holiness” is that **God is sovereign**, **“YHWH reigns, he sits enthroned, over all the peoples”**. As the Divine Sovereign, **“YHWH is great, he is exalted”**; he is worthy of **“worship”** – **“all peoples”** are required to **“praise his great and awesome name”**.

The translation of mish^epat as “justice” is acceptable in some contexts, but the most important meaning of the singular form of the word is **“justness” as a character attribute of God**, which he requires True Worshipers to also acquire.⁸⁵ In Psalm 99, “justness” is paralleled by both “equity” and “righteousness”. The word “equity” is translated from מִישָׁרִים - mesharim, the plural of מִישׁוֹר - mishor, a masculine noun derived from the verbal root יָשַׁר - yashar. The basic meaning of *yashar* is “to go straight or direct”. Ethically this implies “uprightness”; therefore, both *mishor* and *mesharim* take on a range of meaning including “uprightness”, “justice”, “equity”.⁸⁶ A result of “justness”, to be just, is fairness in all dealings, “equity” – “justness” is paralleled by “equity” because they both have similar meanings.

Similarly, “righteousness” parallels “justness” (*mish^epat*) because both are fundamental characteristics of God. The Hebrew for “righteousness” is צִדְקָה - tz^edaqah, a feminine noun – “righteousness” is its most common translation.⁸⁷ **To be righteous is to be “right” in every way. It is more or less a synonym for “holiness” – only God is truly “righteous”**. As human beings we cannot truly be “righteous” or “holy”, yet **we are required to strive towards these characteristics of God**. In his prayer of thanks, Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, alludes to this requirement:

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people

that **we**, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, **might serve him** without fear,

in holiness and righteousness before him all our days. (Luke 1:68, 74-75 ESV)

Paul is explicit that “holiness” and “righteousness” are required of Christians:

... be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to **put on the new self**, created after the likeness of God in **true righteousness and holiness**. (Ephesians 4:23-24 ESV; see also 1 Thessalonians 2:10, Revelation 22:11)

⁸⁴ For further discussion of this, see section 2.4.5 *The World Tomorrow and Beyond* in the paper “Second Pillar – the Plan of God” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

⁸⁵ For a discussion of this, see *Excursus 1 – mish^epat* in the paper “Covenants of Grace” and *Excursus 4 – David’s Use of mish^epat* in the paper “David – A Man After My Own Heart”, both located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

⁸⁶ See Holladay page 193, TWOT articles 930e and 930f pages 417-418

⁸⁷ See Holladay page 303

Why does God require this? **To be like him, we must become “holy”:**

And [YHWH] spoke to Moses, saying, “Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them, **You shall be holy (qadosh), for I [YHWH] your God am holy (qadosh).** ...”

(Leviticus 19:1-2 ESV; see also 11:44-45, 20:7, 26, 21:8, Numbers 15:40, Deuteronomy 7:6, 14:2, 21, 26:19, 28:9)

... but **as he who called you is holy, you also be holy** in all your conduct, since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.” (1 Peter 1:15-16 ESV; see also 2:5, 9, 2 Peter 3:11)

In the Old Testament, **the purpose of the sacrificial system was to provide a means for the temporary atonement of sin**, so that the nation and each individual person could be accounted “holy” and have a relationship with God. This is discussed in detail in the paper “**To Be a Priest**”, see especially section **6 Holiness**; it is also discussed and in section **10. The Role of Sacrifices** of the paper “**True Worship of the True God**”; both papers are located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca. As discussed in these papers, **the sacrifice of Jesus Christ makes true propitiation for sin possible** and obviates the entire Old Testament sacrificial system. Through the blood of Christ, Christians can now be accounted “holy” by God and can have a relationship with him. **To be truly “holy”, we must be admitted to the God Family**, this occurs through the resurrection as discussed in section **2.1.3 The Resurrection of the Dead** in the paper, “**Second Pillar - The Plan of God**”, located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

Back to Psalm 99, fundamental to maintaining a relationship with God is “**prayer**”, “**call upon his name ... he answered them**” – communication with God. God primarily answers prayer, communicates with us, through his written word, the Bible. Through the Bible God reveals himself and his will for us – the Bible teaches us the Way of God, see section **3 The Way of God** in the paper, “**Third Pillar - The Way of God**”, located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

The summary of the way of God is the Ten Commandments, “**his testimonies**”. The most common word for the Ten Commandments is מִצְוָה - mitz'wah, a feminine noun.⁸⁸ The word עֲדוּת - `eduth, also a feminine noun, always plural, has a broader range of meaning, but is often used **as synonym of mitz'wah**.⁸⁹ The Psalmist asserts that living by the Way of God is necessary to become like God, to become “holy”, “**keep his testimonies (`eduth) and the statute**”. It is curious that “statute” is in the singular. Possibly the Psalmist had a particular statute in mind, but more likely the plural has been lost in copying.⁹⁰

The Psalmist identifies two further characteristics of God’s holiness: **forgiveness and intolerance of sin, “a forgiving God ... but an avenger of ... wrongdoings”**. The basis of any relationship with God is “repentance”, upon which God will forgive – this process is fundamental of the concept of “grace”. But at the same time, God will never tolerate sin, “**wrongdoings**”, in a True Worshiper – sins must be repented of.

There are many other discreet components of the character of God which all derive from and contribute to his “**holiness**”. These are discussed in section **1.4.3 Attributes of God’s Character**.

The Holy One

To complete this section, **two epithets of God** are examined: “**the Holy One**” and “**the Holy One of Israel**”. The Book of Hosea twice uses the epithet “the Holy One”:

... for **I am God** and not a man, **the Holy One (qadosh)** in your midst ...

Ephraim has surrounded **me** with lies, and the house of Israel with deceit,

but Judah still walks with God and is faithful to **the Holy One (qadoshim)**. (Hosea 11:9bα, 12 ESV)

In the first phrase “Holy One” is from קָדוֹשׁ - qadosh, normally a singular adjective but here functioning as substantive, the second phrase is plural, קְדוֹשִׁים - qadoshim, but still apparently refers to God.

Perhaps there is an analogy here to singular אֵל - `el, and plural אֱלֹהִים - `elohim.

⁸⁸ See Holladay page 210

⁸⁹ See **TWOT** article 1576f pages 649-650

⁹⁰ For a discussion of “statutes”, see **Excursus 4 – Statutes and Ancient Law Codes** in the paper “**The Writings of Moses**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

The Book of Job uses the singular whereas in Proverbs the plural occurs twice:

This would be my comfort; I would even exult in pain unsparing,
for I have not denied the words of **the Holy One (qadosh)**. (Job 6:10 ESV)

The fear of [YHWH] is the beginning of wisdom,
and the knowledge of **the Holy One (qadoshim)** is insight.

I have not learned wisdom, nor have I knowledge of **the Holy One (qadoshim)**.
(Proverbs 9:10, 30:3 ESV)

Thrice **the Prophet Isaiah** uses the singular form to refer to God:

To whom then will you compare me, that I should be like him? says **the Holy One (qadosh)**.

I am [YHWH], **your Holy One (qadosh)**, the Creator of Israel, your King.

Thus says [YHWH], the Redeemer of Israel and **his Holy One (qadosh)**,
to one deeply despised, abhorred by the nation, the servant of rulers:
(Isaiah 40:25, 43:15, 49:7a ESV; see also 6:3)

The later Prophets **Habakkuk** and **Zechariah** use both forms:

Are you not from everlasting, [YHWH] my God, **my Holy One (qadosh)**?

God came from Teman, and **the Holy One (qadosh)** from Mount Paran.
(Habakkuk 1:12a, 3:3a ESV)

Then [YHWH] my God will come, and **all the holy ones (qadoshim) with him**.
(Zechariah 14:5b ESV)

The reference in Zechariah is clearly to the resurrected saints joining Christ in the air at his return.⁹¹ So both *qadosh* and *qadoshim* are used to refer to a specific member of the God Family, YHWH, but **qadoshim is also used for collective members of the God Family**.

The Prophet Isaiah extends the epithet to form one of the most famous epithets for God, **“the Holy One of Israel”**:

They have forsaken [YHWH],
they have despised **the Holy One (qadosh) of Israel**, they are utterly estranged.

The meek shall obtain fresh joy in [YHWH],
and the poor among mankind shall exult in **the Holy One (qadosh) of Israel**.

I am the one who helps you, declares [YHWH];
your Redeemer is **the Holy One (qadosh) of Israel**.

Behold, you shall call a nation that you do not know,
and a nation that did not know you shall run to you,
because of [YHWH] your God, [even] **the Holy One (qadosh) of Israel**, for he has glorified you.
(Isaiah 1:4b, 29:19, 41:14b, 55:5)⁹²

The New Testament authors are explicit that “the Holy One” is Jesus Christ, i.e., the being known as YHWH in the Old Testament is the One who became incarnate in Jesus Christ:

What have you to do with us, **Jesus of Nazareth**? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—**the Holy One of God**.” (Mark 1:24 ESV // Luke 4:34)

So **Jesus said to the twelve**, “Do you want to go away as well?” **Simon Peter answered him**, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, and we have believed, and have come to know, that **you are the Holy One of God**.” (John 6:67-69 ESV)

Men of Israel, hear these words: **Jesus of Nazareth**, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs ... For **David says concerning him** ...

For you will not abandon my [body] to [the grave], or let **your Holy One** see corruption.
(Psalm 16:10)

(Acts 2:22a, 25a, 27 ESV; see also Acts 13:35)

But **you have been anointed by the Holy One**, and you all have knowledge. I write to you, not because you do not know the truth, but because **you know** it, and because no lie is of **the truth**. Who is the liar but he who denies **that Jesus is the Christ**? (1 John 2:20-22a ESV)

... from **Jesus Christ the faithful witness**, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth. ... **I am** the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, **“who is and who was and who is to come**, the Almighty.”

... Just are you, **O Holy One**, who is and who was, for you brought these judgments.
(Revelation 1:5, 8, 16:5b ESV)

⁹¹ See 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, Revelation 14:13-16, 19:6-14

⁹² See also Isaiah 5:19,24, 10:20, 12:6, 17:7, 29:23, 30:11,12,15, 31:1, 37:23 (//2 Kings 19:22), 41:16,20, 43:3, 14, 45:11, 47:4, 48:17, 54:5, 60:9,14, Jeremiah 50:29, 51:5, Psalms 71:22, 78:41, 89:18

Holiness is the fundamental to the Nature of God. YHWH was explicitly identified by the epithets “The Holy One” and “The Holy One of Israel”. Jesus Christ is specifically identified by the New Testament author as “The Holy One”.

1.4.2 The Name of God

What is in a name? The most important attribute of a name is that it identifies. The “name of God” **identifies who and what God is**. In some of Jesus’ last public teaching, the Apostle John records that Jesus prays for “glorification of the name of the Father”:

Now is my [mind] troubled. And what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? But for this purpose I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name. Then a voice came from heaven: “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” The crowd that stood there and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not mine. ...” (John 12:27-30 ESV)

Jesus had previously told a crowd that “his works were done in the name of the Father”:

So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, “How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly.” Jesus answered them, “I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father’s name bear witness about me, but you do not believe because you are not among my sheep. ...” (John 10:24-26 ESV)

The night before the crucifixion, Jesus prays to the Father. He is explicit that his resurrection is the “glorification” to which he had previously alluded. Based on that glorification, Jesus prays that the Father will “keep in his name” the disciples, the True Worshippers, who are among Jesus’ sheep:

When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.

I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you. For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me.

I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you.

Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. ... I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them. (John 17:1-12a, 26 ESV)

Jesus is explicit that True Worshippers are to be identified by the “name of the Father”. Yet nowhere in the Bible is an explicit “Name of the Father” revealed.⁹³ Jesus is explicit that he came to reveal the Father to True Worshippers. Much earlier, during the Galilean Ministry, Jesus had said:

At that time Jesus declared, “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. ...” (Matthew 11:25-27 ESV; see also Luke 10:21-22)

On the night of the First Christian Passover, Philip asks Jesus about the Father. Jesus’ reply is that his own life and work have been the revelation of the Father:

Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.” Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his

⁹³ For a discussion of the names אֱלֹהִים - 'el and אֱלֹהִים - 'elohim, see section 2.1.1. The Family Name in the paper “Second Pillar - The Plan of God” located at www.mikehytebiblicalresearch.ca. The closest there is to an explicit “name” of the Father is the epithet “Ancient of Days” in Daniel 7:9-10.

works. **Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me**, or else believe on account of the works themselves. ..." (John 14:8-11 ESV)

Jesus goes on to discuss the **indwelling of the Holy Spirit** which provides the unity between himself and the Father. He promises the apostles that they too will have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and participate in the unity.⁹⁴ **When Jesus refers to the "name of the Father", he implies the "identity of the Father"** as the supreme Creator and Ruler over all the creation and all eternity. The identity of the Father is exemplified by the life and teaching of Jesus Christ. We can know the Father by knowing Jesus Christ. The most important role of the divine being that Jesus revealed as "God the Father" is as **Father of the Family of God** – the destiny for which he has created the human race.

1.4.2.1 Explicit Form of God's Name

The human language which is used to refer to the name of God is irrelevant. The **Prophet Isaiah** was explicitly told the name of the prophesized Messiah. **Isaiah recorded in Hebrew:**

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall **call his name Immanuel**. (Isaiah 7:14 ESV)

The Hebrew is עִמָּנוּ אֵל - 'immanu 'el, "with us is God".⁹⁵ When the time for the birth came, Luke records the announcement to Mary, and Matthew records the announcement to Joseph. **Both Luke and Matthew wrote in Greek:**⁹⁶

And the angel said to her, "**Do not be afraid, Mary**, for you have found favor with God. And behold, **you will conceive in your womb and bear a son**, and you shall **call his name Jesus**." (Luke 1:30-31 ESV; see also 2:21, Matthew 1:25)

Now **the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way**. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. And her husband **Joseph**, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he **considered these things**, behold, **an angel of the Lord appeared to him** in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, **do not fear to take Mary as your wife**, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. **She will bear a son**, and you shall **call his name Jesus**, for **he will save his people from their sins**."

All **this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:**

Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall **call his name Immanuel** (which means, God with us).

(Matthew 1:18-23 ESV)

The Greek words are Ἰησοῦς - Iēsous, "Jesus", and Ἐμμανουήλ - Emmanouēl, "Immanuel". Mary and Joseph spoke Aramaic, so the original communication to them was NOT in Greek. The name, *Iēsous*, is the Greek form of the Hebrew name "Joshua", יְהוֹשֻׁעַ - yēhōshua', "YHWH is salvation".⁹⁷ Joseph was told "**call his name Jesus**, for **he will save his people from their sins**". The name "Immanuel", "God with us", **implies salvation**: "Joshua/Jesus", "YHWH is salvation". Clearly it is **the meaning of the name**, the **identity of the being to whom the name refers**, that is important – not the explicit form of the name or the language in which it is pronounced.

This is extremely important with the name "YHWH". In Hellenistic times, the Jews became superstitious about the pronunciation of YHWH – they would not pronounce it. In the translation of the Pentateuch which came to be known as the Septuagint, the Jews used κύριος – kyrios, "lord, owner, ruler, sir, master", to translate YHWH. Later in the Masoretic text, the actual pronunciation of YHWH was NOT preserved. **Through the Vulgate, "the LORD" passed into English**. In 1611, this may have been a reasonable translation, as it may have implied the "Supreme Master", which is not meaningful today. If the name is to be translated today, something like "The Eternal One", or "The Ever-living One", "The Self-sustaining One" would be preferred.

⁹⁴ See John 14:15-31

⁹⁵ See **BDB** page 769

⁹⁶ Some contend that Matthew wrote originally in Aramaic then translated to Greek; see Guthrie pages 33-40.

⁹⁷ See **BDB** page 221

1.4.2.2 Seminal Scriptures

In **God's revelation of himself** to the people of Israel assembled at Mount Sinai, **his third main point related to his name**:

I am [YHWH] your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

You shall not take the name of [YHWH] your God in vain, for [YHWH] will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain. (Exodus 20:2, 7 ESV // Deuteronomy 5:6, 11)

Later, as **Jesus Christ**, YHWH, reiterated **the importance of the "name of God"**:

Pray then like this: "Our Father in heaven, **hallowed be your name**. ..." (Matthew 6:9 ESV // Luke 11:2)

Jesus' emphasis is that God is Holy, with all the implications of that for a True Worshipper. Only True Worshipers, persons in whom is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, are granted the immediate privilege of coming before the throne of God in eternity through prayer. **The proscription against taking the "name of God in vain"** identifies the antithesis of being a True Worshipper. The "name of God" is upon True Worshipers, members of the God Family, to disgrace that name in any way is a violation of the privilege of having been accepted by God. People of the world who do NOT know God, regularly take God's name in vain, because they DO NOT understand what it means. Eventually they also will be brought to repentance, but until then, they are guilty.

In Egypt, **the descendants of Jacob** were enslaved for about a hundred years, three to four generations. During that period of time much was lost. In particular **the true worship of the God** of the fathers, Abraham, Issac, and Jacob, **became a thing of the past** – although the dim memory of it continued among some. **Moses was aware of this past heritage**. He no doubt was reacquainted with more of it by **his father-in-law Jethro/Reul**, who was a direct descendant of Abraham through Abraham's son Midian.⁹⁸ The descendants of Midian had never suffered slavery, so they no doubt had retained considerable knowledge of their heritage. After forty years of quiet contemplation as a shepherd in the service of Jethro/Reul, **God called Moses**.⁹⁹ Moses knew he would have a credibility problem with the people of Israel:

Then **Moses said to God**, "If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?"

God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel: 'I AM has sent me to you.'" God also said to Moses, "Say this to the people of Israel: '[YHWH], the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' **This is my name** forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations.

Go and gather the elders of Israel together and say to them, '[YHWH], the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, has appeared to me, saying, "I have observed you and what has been done to you in Egypt, and I promise that I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt ..."' (Exodus 3:13-17a ESV)

God uses the phrase, אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה - 'eh^eyeh 'asher 'eh^eyeh, to identify himself. The verb, 'eh^eyeh, is a "qal, imperfect first common singular",¹⁰⁰ from the verbal root הָיָה - hayah, "to be", "to become".¹⁰¹ "Imperfect" implies on-going, uncompleted action – **"I am" is a good translation**. The relative particle, 'asher, carries a range of meaning similar to "who", "that", or "which".¹⁰² God is associating the name **"YHWH" with his self existence, his self determination, his holiness**. **Clearly the name "YHWH" was known during the Patriarchal Period**,¹⁰³ but it would take on new significance as God's plan unfolded and Israel became the Covenant Nation under YHWH as suzerain.

⁹⁸ For a discussion of the role Jethro/Reul, see *Excurses 2 – Jethro, the Priest of Midian*, in the paper "The Writings of Moses", located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

⁹⁹ See Exodus 3:1-6

¹⁰⁰ See www.esv.org "Hebrew Word Detail"

¹⁰¹ See Holladay pages 78-79

¹⁰² See Holladay page 30

¹⁰³ See for example, Genesis 4:26, 12:8, 13:4, 15:7,13,18, 21:33, 22:14, 26:22,25; for a discussion of theories which try discount this, see section **1. The Documentary Hypothesis** in the paper "The Writings of Moses" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

God further elaborated the significance of the name “YHWH” in the instructions Moses was to give to the people of Israel:

God spoke to Moses and said to him, “I am [YHWH]. I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty, but by my name [YHWH] I did not make myself known to them. I also established my covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, the land in which they lived as sojourners.

Moreover, I have heard the groaning of the people of Israel whom the Egyptians hold as slaves, and **I have remembered my covenant.** Say therefore to the people of Israel, ‘**I am [YHWH], and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians,** and I will deliver you from slavery to them, and **I will redeem you** with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment.

I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God, and you shall know that **I am [YHWH] your God,** who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. **I will bring you into the land** that I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. **I will give it to you for a possession. I am [YHWH].”** (Exodus 6:2-8 ESV)

Analysis of God’s instructions for the people:

- In patriarchal times God had revealed himself as אֱלֹהֵי - ‘el shadday, “El Shaddai”, “God Almighty”:
When Abram was ninety-nine years old [YHWH] appeared to Abram and said to him, “**I am God Almighty;** walk before me, and be blameless, that **I may make my covenant between me** and you, and may multiply you greatly.” (Genesis 17:1-2 ESV)
- Under the name ‘el shadday, God established his covenant with Abraham and confirmed the covenant with the covenant bearers:¹⁰⁵
And **God said to him,** “Behold, **my covenant is with you,** and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you. And **I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you** throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, **to be God to you and to your offspring after you.** And **I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings,** all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and **I will be their God.**” (Genesis 17:3b-8 ESV)
- The covenantal nature of the name “YHWH” was not known to the patriarchs
- The basis of the covenant with the people of Israel would be their removal from slavery in Egypt
- This redemption would make people of Israel the property of YHWH, his slaves
- As specified in the covenant with Abraham, El Shaddai, now identified as YHWH would be their God
- On this basis, YHWH would fulfill the covenantal promise to Abraham to give to Abraham’s descendants the Land of Canaan

As discussed in section **Grace חַנּוּן - hanan**, the focus of God’s personal theophany to Moses is the Nature of God. However, **God is very careful to associate the revelation of his nature with his name:**

Moses said, “Please show me your glory.” And he said, “I will make all my goodness pass before you and will **proclaim before you my name ‘[YHWH].’**

[YHWH] descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and **proclaimed the name of [YHWH].** [YHWH] passed before him and proclaimed, “[YHWH], [YHWH], a God **merciful and gracious, slow to anger,** and **abounding in [hesed] and faithfulness, keeping [hesed]** for thousands, **forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin,** but who will **by no means clear the guilty,** visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children’s children, to the third and the fourth generation.” (Exodus 33:18-19a, 34:5-7 ESV)

The “name of God” is the identity of God. The explicit form of the name or language in which the name is expressed to reference God is irrelevant. God’s objective in the revelation of himself associated with his “name” is that True Worshipers come to know God, to have a personal relationship with God. The God Family is currently comprised of two beings, God the Father and Jesus Christ, YHWH. To be granted the gift of eternal life and thus become full members of the God Family, **we humans must respond to**

¹⁰⁴ See the discussion of the name, ‘el, in section **2.1.1. The Family Name** in the paper “**Second Pillar - The Plan of God**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

¹⁰⁵ See Genesis 28:13, 35:11, 48:3-4; for a discussion of this covenant see section **3. The Covenant of Promise** in the paper “**Covenants of Grace**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

God's love and grace as revealed through the "name of God". The New Testament is explicit that this is the only path to salvation:

Then **Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them,**

Rulers of the people and elders, if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed, let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that **by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth**, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead ...

This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. And **there is salvation in no one else**, for **there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved**. ... To him all the prophets bear witness that **everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name**.

(Acts 4:8-10a, 11-12, 10:43 ESV)

Then **[Jesus] opened their minds to understand the Scriptures**, and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that **repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name** to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. (Luke 24 45-47 ESV)

But the Helper, **the Holy Spirit**, [which] **the Father will send in my name**, [it] will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. ... but these are written so that **you may believe that Jesus is the Christ**, the Son of God, and that by believing **you may have life in his name**.

(John 14:26, 20:31 ESV)

For "**everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved**." (Romans 10:13 ESV cited from Joel 2:32)

The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it, and **I will write on him the name of my God** ... No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. They will see his face, and **his name will be on their foreheads**. (Revelation 3:12a, 22:3-4 ESV)

God is identified by his name. Those he calls to be **True Worshipers** are associated with the Name of God – they are called to be part of the God Family. To take the name of God in vain is to violate this relationship. The Name of God was the basis of the **covenant relationship** between YHWH and Israel. This brought the Nation of Israel and each individual Israelite into a relationship with God. YHWH became Jesus Christ – the New Testament authors affirm that **"Jesus Christ" is the only name by which salvation is possible**.

1.4.2.3 Holiness of the Name of God

The verbal root הָלַל - ḥālal may represent as many as four distinct words. Both TWOT and BDB identify two homonyms: **one meaning "profane"** the other meaning "pierce". BDB finds another homonym "play the pipe" and TWOT suggests another "to begin".¹⁰⁶ **The ESV English word "profane" is translated from ḥālal in all but five instances.**¹⁰⁷

"To profane" means to render NOT holy. Only God is inherently holy. All things that are NOT holy are "common". Things that cannot be made "holy" are inherently "unclean". Anyone who has sinned or come in contact with the "unclean" is rendered "unclean". **Only God can "sanctify" a person or an object, making it "holy"**.¹⁰⁸ The following scriptures make this meaning clear:

And [YHWH] said to Moses, **"Speak to the priests**, the sons of Aaron, and say to them, **No one shall make himself unclean** for the dead among his people, except for his closest relatives, his mother, his father, his son, his daughter, his brother, or his virgin sister (who is near to him because she has had no husband; for her he may make himself unclean). **He shall not make himself unclean** as a husband among his people and so profane himself. ..." (Leviticus 21:1-4 ESV)

When you offer a sacrifice of peace offerings to [YHWH], **you shall offer it so that you may be accepted**. It shall be eaten the same day you offer it or on the day after, and **anything left over until the third day shall be burned up with fire**. If it is eaten at all on the third day, it is tainted; it will not be accepted, and **everyone who eats it** shall bear his iniquity, because he **has profaned what is holy to [YHWH]**, and that person shall be cut off from his people. (Leviticus 19:5-8 ESV)

So **you shall keep my commandments and do them**: I am [YHWH]. And **you shall not profane my holy name**, that I may be sanctified among the people of Israel. **I am [YHWH] who sanctifies you** ... (Leviticus 22:31-32 ESV)

¹⁰⁶ See BDB pages 319-321, TWOT articles 660 and 661 pages 288-290

¹⁰⁷ See Psalm 35:16, הַנִּפְיָ - haneph, adjective, "godless ones"; Proverbs 30:9, תִּפְּסֵנִי - thaphas, verb, "I profane";

Jeremiah 19:4, נִכְרְ - nakar, verb, "they have profaned"; Ezekiel 21:25, 29 (30, 34 Hebrew), הַנִּלְלִי - adjective, "slain=profane".

¹⁰⁸ For a detailed discussion of "holiness", see section 6. **Holiness**, in the paper **"To Be a Priest"** located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

And the word of [YHWH] came to me: “Son of man, say to her, You are a land that is not cleansed ... Her priests have done violence to my [torah] and have profaned my holy things. They have made no distinction between the holy and the common, neither have they taught the difference between the unclean and the clean, and they have disregarded my Sabbaths, so that I am profaned among them. ...” (Ezekiel 22:23-24a, 26 ESV)

Analysis of “to profane”:

- To serve YHWH, priests could NOT be in an “unclean” state: a dead body is inherently “unclean”, if a priest touched a dead body, he “profaned” himself, rendered himself “unclean”, NOT holy
- When a “peace offering” was accepted by God, he sanctified it, making it holy; anything left until the third day is “tainted”, unclean; anyone who eats an unclean thing profanes himself
- The commandments of God are holy; True Worshipers are required to “do them” – to be “sanctified”, accounted holy by God; for a True Worshiper to disregard the commandments of God, profanes God’s “holy name”
- The priests of Ezekiel’s day had disregarded the *torah* of God, “profaned my holy things”
- They rejected their responsibility to teach the “distinction between the holy and the common” and the “difference between the unclean and the clean”

Because God is represented by his name, his name identifies him, God is very particular that True Worshipers understand the significance of “profaning the name of God”. The priests were particularly enjoined to avoid any action which “profaned the name of God”:

They shall be holy to their God and not profane the name of their God. For they offer the [YHWH’s] offerings by fire, the bread of their God; therefore they shall be holy.

And [YHWH] spoke to Moses, saying, “Speak to Aaron and his sons so that they abstain from the holy things of the people of Israel, which they dedicate to me, so that they do not profane my holy name: I am [YHWH]. Say to them, ‘If any one of all your offspring throughout your generations approaches the holy things that the people of Israel dedicate to [YHWH], while he has an uncleanness, that person shall be cut off from my presence: I am [YHWH]. ...’ (Leviticus 21:6, 22:1-3 ESV)

Any participation in “pagan religious practices”¹⁰⁹ is a profanation of the name of God:

You shall not give any of your children to offer them to Molech, and so profane the name of your God: I am [YHWH]. ... [YHWH] spoke to Moses, saying, “Say to the people of Israel, Any one of the people of Israel or of the strangers who sojourn in Israel who gives any of his children to Molech shall surely be put to death. The people of the land shall stone him with stones. I myself will set my face against that man and will cut him off from among his people, because he has given one of his children to Molech, to make my sanctuary unclean and to profane my holy name. ...” (Leviticus 18:21, 20:1-3 ESV)

Thus says [YHWH] of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I am bringing such disaster upon this place that the ears of everyone who hears of it will tingle. Because the people have forsaken me and have profaned this place by making offerings in it to other gods ... (Jeremiah 19:3b-4a ESV)

As for you, O house of Israel, thus says the Lord [YHWH]: Go serve every one of you his idols, now and hereafter, if you will not listen to me; but my holy name you shall no more profane with your gifts and your idols.

The word of [YHWH] came to me: “Son of man, when the house of Israel lived in their own land, they defiled it by their ways and their deeds. ... I poured out my wrath upon them for the blood that they had shed in the land, for the idols with which they had defiled it. I scattered them among the nations, and they were dispersed through the countries. In accordance with their ways and their deeds I judged them.

But when they came to the nations, wherever they came, they profaned my holy name, in that people said of them, ‘These are the people of [YHWH], and yet they had to go out of his land.’ But I had concern for my holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations to which they came. (Ezekiel 20:39, 36:16-17a, 18-21 ESV)

Personal sins and social injustice are a profanation of the name of God:

You shall not swear by my name falsely, and so profane the name of your God: I am [YHWH]. (Leviticus 19:12 ESV)

Remove far from me falsehood and lying:

give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is needful for me,

lest I be full and deny you and say, “Who is [YHWH]?”

or lest I be poor and steal and profane the name of my God. (Proverbs 30:8-9 ESV)

¹⁰⁹ To True Christians in the modern world, this includes “Christmas”, “Easter”, and “Sunday worship”.
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You recently repented and did what was right in my eyes by proclaiming liberty, each to his neighbor, and you made a covenant before me in the house that is called by my name, but then you turned around and profaned my name when each of you took back his male and female slaves, whom you had set free according to their desire, and you brought them into subjection to be your slaves. (Jeremiah 34:15-16 ESV)

You have profaned me among my people for handfuls of barley and for pieces of bread, putting to death [persons] who should not die and keeping alive [persons] who should not live, by your lying to my people, who listen to lies. (Ezekiel 13:19 ESV)

For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not revoke the punishment, because they sell the righteous for silver, and the needy for a pair of sandals—those who trample the head of the poor into the dust of the earth and turn aside the way of the afflicted; a man and his father go in to the same girl, so that my holy name is profaned; (Amos 2:6-7 ESV)

A very grievous sin, perhaps an unpardonable sin, is “to blaspheme” the name of God:

Now an Israelite woman’s son, whose father was an Egyptian, went out among the people of Israel. And the Israelite woman’s son and a man of Israel fought in the camp, and the Israelite woman’s son blasphemed the Name, and cursed. ... Then [YHWH] spoke to Moses, saying, “Bring out of the camp the one who cursed, and let all who heard him lay their hands on his head, and let all the congregation stone him. And speak to the people of Israel, saying, Whoever curses his God shall bear his sin. Whoever blasphemes the name of [YHWH] shall surely be put to death. All the congregation shall stone him. The sojourner as well as the native, when he blasphemes the Name, shall be put to death. (Leviticus 24:10-11a, 13-16 ESV)

Truly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the children of man, and whatever blasphemies they utter, but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin ... (Mark 3:28-29 ESV; see also Matthew 12:31-32, Luke 12:10, 1 Corinthians 12:3, Hebrews 10:29)

In the end, God will act for the sake of his Holy Name. All profanation of the name of God will stop. All people in all nations will learn to reverence the True God and will be taught respect for his name:

Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord [YHWH]: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations to which you came. And I will vindicate the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, and which you have profaned among them. And the nations will know that I am [YHWH], declares the Lord [YHWH], when through you I vindicate my holiness before their eyes.

And my holy name I will make known in the midst of my people Israel, and I will not let my holy name be profaned anymore. And the nations shall know that I am [YHWH], the Holy One in Israel. Behold, it is coming and it will be brought about, declares the Lord [YHWH]. That is the day of which I have spoken. (Ezekiel 36:22-24, 39:7-8 ESV)

Then [YHWH] said to Moses, “Rise up early in the morning and present yourself before Pharaoh and say to him ... But for this purpose I have raised you up, to show you my power, so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth. ...” (Exodus 9:13a, 16 ESV; see Romans 9:17)

On the day when I chose Israel, I swore to the offspring of the house of Jacob, making myself known to them in the land of Egypt; I swore to them, saying, I am [YHWH] your God. On that day I swore to them that I would bring them out of the land of Egypt ... But they rebelled against me and were not willing to listen to me. ...

Then I said I would pour out my wrath upon them and spend my anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt. But I acted for the sake of my name, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations ... But the house of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness. ...

Then I said I would pour out my wrath upon them in the wilderness, to make a full end of them. But I acted for the sake of my name, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations ... But the children rebelled against me. ... But I withheld my hand and acted for the sake of my name, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations ...

As I live, declares the Lord [YHWH], surely with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm and with wrath poured out I will be king over you. ... And you shall know that I am [YHWH], when I deal with you for my name’s sake, not according to your evil ways, nor according to your corrupt deeds, O house of Israel, declares the Lord [YHWH]. (Ezekiel 20:5b-6a, 8aα, 8b-9a, 13aα, 13b-14a, 21aα, 22a, 33, 44 ESV; see also Daniel 9:15, Nehemiah 9:9-21)

And [YHWH] will be king over all the earth. On that day [YHWH] will be one and this name one. (Zechariah 14:9 ESV)

To “profane” the Name of God is to regard the Name and God himself NOT holy. This is a particular concern for those called to be True Worshipers – any participation in pagan worship is to profane the

Name of God profane. Any sin renders a person “unclean”, and if it is NOT repented of, it profanes the Name of God. **Ultimately, God will teach the whole world to understand the holiness of his Name.**

1.4.2.4 The Name of God in Worship

When King David brought the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem in preparation for the Temple which Solomon was to build, **it was a joyous occasion of worship:**

So **David went and brought up the ark of God** from the house of Obed-edom **to the city of David with rejoicing**. And when those who bore the ark of [YHWH] had gone six steps, **he sacrificed an ox and a fattened animal**. And **David danced before [YHWH]** with all his might. ... So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of [YHWH] **with shouting and with the sound of the horn**.

And they brought in the ark of [YHWH] and set it in its place, inside the tent that David had pitched for it. And **David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before [YHWH]**. And when David had finished offering the burnt offerings and the peace offerings, **he blessed the people in the name of [YHWH] of hosts** and **distributed among all the people**, the whole multitude of Israel, both men and women, a cake of bread, **a portion of meat**, and **a cake of raisins** to each one.
(2 Samuel 6:12b-14a, 15, 17-19a ESV // 1 Chronicles 15:25, 28, 16:1-3)

The Chronicler greatly elaborates David’s preparations for worship:¹¹⁰

Then **he appointed some of the Levites as ministers before the ark of [YHWH], to invoke, to thank, and to praise [YHWH]**, the God of Israel. Asaph was the chief, and second to him were Zechariah, Jeiel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Mattithiah, Eliab, Benaiah, Obed-edom, and Jeiel, **who were to play harps and lyres**; Asaph was to **sound the cymbals**, and Benaiah and Jahaziel the priests were to **blow trumpets** regularly before the ark of the covenant of God. Then **on that day David first appointed that thanksgiving be sung to [YHWH] by Asaph and his brothers**. (1 Chronicles 16:4-7 ESV)

The Chronicler then uses three unascribed Psalms¹¹¹ as the basis for **a montage of worship** with **great emphasis on the “name of God”:**

Oh **give thanks to [YHWH]**; **call upon his name**; make known his deeds among the peoples!

Sing to him, sing praises to him; tell of all his wondrous works!

Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek [YHWH] rejoice!

Sing to [YHWH], all the earth! Tell of his salvation from day to day.

Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples!

For great is [YHWH], and greatly to be praised, and he is to be feared above all gods.

Ascribe to [YHWH], O families of the peoples, **ascribe to [YHWH] glory and strength!**

Ascribe to [YHWH] the glory due his name; bring an offering and come before him!

Save us, O God of our salvation, and gather and deliver us from among the nations, that we may **give thanks to your holy name** and **glory in your praise**.

(1 Chronicles 16:8-10, 23-25, 28-29a, 35 ESV)

When the Temple is completed, **in a public worship service**, King Solomon makes it clear that the Temple represents the identity of God. **It is the name of God that dwells in the Temple:**

Then **Solomon stood before the altar of [YHWH]** in the presence of all the assembly of Israel and spread out his hands toward heaven, and said, “[YHWH], God of Israel, there is no God like you, in heaven above or on earth beneath ... **But will God indeed dwell on the earth?** Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you; how much less this house that I have built! Yet have regard to the prayer of your servant and to his plea, [YHWH] my God, listening to **the cry and to the prayer that your servant** prays before you this day, that **your eyes may be open night and day toward this house**, the place of which you have said, **‘My name shall be there’** ...

“When your people Israel are defeated before the enemy because they have sinned against you, and **if they turn again to you and acknowledge your name** ...

“When heaven is shut up and there is no rain because they have sinned against you, **if they pray toward this place and acknowledge your name** ...

“Likewise, **when a foreigner**, who is not of your people Israel, **comes from a far country for your name’s sake** (for **they shall hear of your great name** and your mighty hand, and of your outstretched arm), when he comes and prays toward this house, **hear in heaven your dwelling place** and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to you, in order that **all the peoples of the earth may know your name** and fear you, as do your people Israel, and that they may know that **this house that I have built is called by your name**.

¹¹⁰ See the Chronicler’s account of David’s preparations in 1 Chronicles chapters 23, 24, 25 and 26.

¹¹¹ Compare: 1 Chronicles 16:8-22 with Psalm 105:1-15; 1 Chronicles 16:23-33 with Psalm 96:1-13a; 1 Chronicles 16:35-36 with Psalm 106:47-48a

"If your people go out to battle against their enemy, by whatever way you shall send them, and they pray to [YHWH] toward the city that you have chosen and **the house that I have built for your name** ...

"If they repent with all their heart and with all their [mind] in the land of their enemies, who carried them captive, and pray to you toward their land, which you gave to their fathers, the city that you have chosen, and **the house that I have built for your name**, then **hear in heaven your dwelling place** their prayer and their plea ..." (1 Kings 8:22-23a, 27-29a,33a, 35a, 41-44, 48-49a ESV see also 2 Chronicles 6:12-40)

Fundamental to proper worship of God is an understanding of his majesty, his greatness, his glory as embodied in his Name:

[YHWH], our Lord, **how majestic is your name in all the earth!**

You have set **your glory** above the heavens.

Ascribe to [YHWH], sons of God,¹¹² **ascribe to [YHWH] glory and strength.**

Ascribe to [YHWH] **the glory due his name; worship [YHWH]** in the splendor of holiness.

There is none like you among the [‘elohim],¹¹³ O Lord, nor are there any works like yours.

All the nations you have made shall come and worship before you, O Lord, and shall **glorify your name.**

For **you are great** and do wondrous things; **you alone are God.**

Not to us, [YHWH], not to us, but **to your name give glory,**

for the sake of your [hesed] and your faithfulness!

Why should the nations say, "Where is their God?"

Our God is in the heavens; **he does all that he pleases.**

(Psalms 8:1, 29:1-2, 86:8-10, 115:1-3 ESV)

Given the majesty of God, it is only natural to thank God and sing praises to his name:

I will give to [YHWH] the thanks due to his righteousness,
and **I will sing praise to the name of [YHWH],** the Most High.

I will give thanks to [YHWH] with my whole heart; **I will recount all of your wonderful deeds.**

I will be glad and exult in you; **I will sing praise to your name,** O Most High.

We have thought on your [hesed], O God, in the midst of your temple.

As your name, O God, so **your praise reaches to the ends of the earth.**

O God, you are my God; **earnestly I seek you;** my [being] thirsts for you;

my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.

So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, **beholding your power and glory.**

Because your [hesed] is better than life, **my lips will praise you.**

So I will bless you as long as I live; **in your name I will lift up my hands.**

Shout for joy to God, **all the earth; sing the glory of his name;** give to him glorious praise!

Say to God, "How awesome are your deeds!

So **great is your power** that your enemies come cringing to you.

All the earth worships you and **sings praises** to you; they **sing praises to your name.**

Praise [YHWH! Praise, O servants of [YHWH], **praise the name of [YHWH]!**

Blessed be the name of [YHWH] from this time forth and forevermore!

From the rising of the sun to its setting, **the name of [YHWH] is to be praised!**

I will extol you, my God and King, and **bless your name forever and ever.**

Every day I will bless you and **praise your name forever and ever.**

Great is [YHWH], and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable.

Praise [YHWH]! Sing to [YHWH] a new song, his praise in the assembly of the godly!

Let Israel be glad in his Maker; let the children of Zion rejoice in their King!

Let them **praise his name with dancing,** making melody to him with tambourine and lyre!

For [YHWH] takes pleasure in his people; **he adorns the humble with salvation.**

(Psalms 7:17, 9:1-2, 48:9-10, 63:1-4, 66:1-4, 113:1-3, 145:1-3, 149:1-4 ESV)

Praising God is epitomized by extolling his greatness, identified by his name, and reciprocating his love, as a reflection of his identity:

But let all who take refuge in you rejoice;

let them ever sing for joy, and spread your protection over them,

that **those who love your name may exult in you.**

[YHWH] is a stronghold for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble.

And **those who know your name put their trust in you,**

for you, [YHWH], have not forsaken those who seek you.

¹¹² See ESV footnote

¹¹³ See the discussion of ‘elohim in section 2.1.1. *The Family Name*, in the paper "Second Pillar - The Plan of God" located at www.mikehytebiblicalresearch.ca.

Our [being] waits for [YHWH]; he is our help and our shield.
For our heart is glad in him, because **we trust in his holy name.**
Let your [hesed], [YHWH], be upon us, even as we hope in you.

[YHWH] reigns; let the peoples tremble!
He sits enthroned upon the cherubim; let the earth quake!
[YHWH] is great in Zion; **he is exalted over all the peoples.**
Let them praise your great and awesome name! Holy is he!

Let this be recorded for a generation to come, so that **a people yet to be created may praise [YHWH]:**
that he looked down from his holy height; from heaven [YHWH] looked at the earth,
to hear the groans of the prisoners, to set free those who were doomed to die,
that **they may declare in Zion the name of [YHWH], and in Jerusalem his praise,**
when peoples gather together, and kingdoms, to worship [YHWH].

Kings of the earth and all peoples, princes and all rulers of the earth!
Young men and maidens together, old men and children!
Let them praise the name of [YHWH], for his name alone is exalted;
his majesty is above earth and heaven.

He has raised up a horn for his people, **praise for all his saints,**
for the people of Israel who are near to him. **Praise [YHWH]!**
(Psalms 5:11, 9:9-10, 33:20-22, 99:1-3, 102:18-22, 148:11-14 ESV)

The name of God should be used freely in worship to identify who God is and what he represents – his unfailing love for those people he has called to be True Worshipper, which will eventually extend to all humanity. God is represented by his name – it was his presence in Solomon’s Temple. The name of God is upon all True Worshipers, who are to **extoll and praise the Name for all it represents.**

1.4.3 Attributes of God’s Character

From the Bible it is possible to derive many characteristics of the Nature of God. The **Apostle John** is explicit that those who participate in the First Resurrection must **“be like him”**; we must take on the Nature of God – **to take on the Nature of God we must understand it;** we must become **“pure as he is pure”**:

Beloved, **we are God’s children** now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that **when he appears we shall be like him,** because we shall see him as he is. And **everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.** (1 John 3:2-3 ESV)

The following collection of divine attributes is NOT intended to be comprehensive or exhaustive – it is merely representative. **No finite description or set of descriptions can possibly be a complete description of the Eternal God:**

But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, **heaven (shamayim) and the highest heaven(shamayim) cannot contain you;** how much less this house that I have built! (1 Kings 8:27 ESV)

The two most important words in understanding the Nature of God are:

- חֶסֶד - hesed, “covenant love”, a masculine noun
- מִשְׁפָּט - mishpat, “justness”, “justice”, a masculine noun, and its plural, מִשְׁפָּטִים - mishpatim, “understanding”, “wisdom”, “discernment”, that come from living by the Way of God

The following verbal roots and their related nouns and adjectives are among the most important examples of the characteristics of the Nature of God:

- קָדַשׁ - qadash, “holiness”, “to be holy” (TWOT article 1990 pages 786-789)
- חָנָן - hanan, “grace”, “favour”, “compassion” (TWOT article 694 pages 302-304)
- טוֹב - tov, “goodness” (TWOT article 793 pages 345-346)
- רַחֵם - raham, “mercy”, “pity”, “merciful” (TWOT article 2146 pages 841-843)
- אֶרֶךְ אַפַּיִם - erek aphayim, “slow to anger” (TWOT article 133, page 58)
- אָמֵן - aman, “faithfulness”, “truthfulness”, “trustworthy” (TWOT article 116 pages 51-53)
- צְדָקָה - tzadaq, “righteousness”, (TWOT article 1879 pages 752-755)
- יָשָׁר - yashar, “uprightness”, (TWOT article 930 pages 417-418)
- נָשָׂא - nasa, “forgiving” (TWOT article 1421 pages 600-602)

- סָלַח - salah, “forgiving” (TWOT article 1505 page 626)
- יָטַב - yataḇ, “showing beneficence” (TWOT article 863 page 375)
- גָּמַל - gamal, “deal bountifully” (TWOT article 360 page 166)
- יָדַע - yadaʿ, “knowledgeable”, “all knowing” (TWOT article 848 pages 366-368)
- קָנָא - qanaʿ, “jealous”, “zealous”, (TWOT article 2038 pages 802-803)
- כָּוֵן - kun, “solid”, “reliable” (TWOT article 964 pages 433-434)
- נָחַם - naḥam, “consistent”, “not fickle” (TWOT article 1344 pages 570-571)
- עָזַז - ʿazaz, “mighty”, “powerful”, “strong” (TWOT article 1596 pages 659-660)

חֶסֶד - hesed and מִשְׁפָּט - mishʿpat

The word *hesed* is the single most important word for describing the characteristics of the Nature of God. There is no English word which properly translates *hesed*. The traditional translation of “mercy” is completely incorrect. Words such as “kindness” or “loyalty” may express a nuance in a particular situation. The ESV, and other modern translations, frequently use “steadfast love”, but that ignores **the fundamental covenantal nature of the word**. From God’s perspective, *hesed* implies his **unfailing commitment to a covenant relationship**, and God requires that the recipient of his *hesed* learn to express it reciprocally; hence, the best we can do in English is “covenant love”. Every instance of the word, *hesed*, is discussed ***Excursus 2 - hesed***, in the paper “**Covenants of Grace**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

The **Apostle John** comes closest to defining *hesed*:

Anyone who does not love (agapaō) does not know God, because **God is love (agape)**. In this **the love (agape) of God was made manifest** among us, that **God sent his only Son into the world**, so that we might live through him. In this is love (agape), not that we have loved (agapaō) God but that he loved (agapaō) us and sent his Son **to be the propitiation for our sins**. Beloved, if God so loved (agapaō) us, we also ought to love (agapaō) one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love (agapaō) one another, **God abides in us and his love (agape) is perfected in us**.

By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and testify that **the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world**. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, **God abides in him, and he in God**. So we have come to know and to believe the love (agape) that God has for us. **God is love (agape)**, and whoever abides in love (agape) abides in God, and God abides in him. (1 John 4:8-16 ESV)

God’s most fundamental character attribute is “love”, covenant love. In the above passage John uses the verb ἀγαπάω - agapaō and the feminine noun ἀγάπη - agapē. These are the closest words Greek has to *hesed*. John is explicit that Jesus’ coming was to fulfill the covenant promises of the Old Testament, **“God sent his only Son into the world ... to be the propitiation for our sins”, “the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world”**. Through Jesus’ sacrifice it is possible for the *hesed* of God to grow in us, **“God abides in us and his love is perfected in us”**. In this way we can reciprocally return *hesed* to God, **“God abides in him, and he in God”**.

The second most important word to understand the Nature of God is *mishʿpat*.¹¹⁴ This word has been discussed above in section **1.4.1 God is Holy**, where it was demonstrated that there is an intimate relationship among several key attributes of the Nature of God: holiness (*qadash*), righteousness (*tzadaq*), uprightness (*yashar*), and justness (*mishʿpat*). **Briefly, *mishʿpat* describes God’s fundamental “justness” in all his doings**. There is no shadow of partiality in God – he is fully fair in all dealings with each and every human being.¹¹⁵ “Righteousness” (*tzadaq*) and “uprightness” (*yashar*) are functions of *mishʿpat*. It is not possible for there to be any corruption, iniquity, or deceit in God – these are evils created by Satan the Devil when he rebelled. They are the antithesis of God’s righteousness, which is implied by *mishʿpat*. **The plural, *mishʿpatim*, embodies the result of living by the Way of God**. The

¹¹⁴ For a discussion of this word, see ***Excursus 1 – mishʿpat***, in the paper “**Covenants of Grace**”; and ***Excursus 4 – David’s Use of mishʿpat***, in the paper “**David – A Man After My Own Heart**”; both papers are located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

¹¹⁵ This needs to be understood within the context of “election” – see section **2.3.1 Election**, in the paper “**Second Pillar - The Plan of God**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

purpose of living by the Way of God is to become like God – to take on his nature. This gives a person *mishpatim* – godly wisdom, godly discernment, and godly understanding.

Holiness קֹדֶשׁ - qadash

“**Holiness**” is more a “**state of being**” than a character attribute – this was discussed in the previous section, **1.4.1 God is Holy**. The verbal root קִדַּשׁ - qadash, carries the range of meaning including “holiness”, “to be holy”, “to make holy”. The adjective קָדוֹשׁ - qadosh, was discussed in the previous section, **1.4.1 God is Holy**. The masculine noun קֹדֶשׁ - qodesh, means “apartness”, “holiness”, “sacredness”. Most occurrences of these words relate to things made “holy” by the presence of God, or by the command of God (e.g., the Priest’s garments,¹¹⁶ the Levitical service,¹¹⁷ and the sacrifices¹¹⁸).

The seminal scripture on the “presence” of God is the “burning bush” incident – because God was present the ground became holy, and Moses was allowed to approach only so far:

Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian, and he led his flock to the [back] side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. And **the angel of [YHWH]**¹¹⁹ **appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush**. He looked, and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed. And Moses said, “I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned.”

When [YHWH] saw that he turned aside to see, **God called to him out of the bush**, “Moses, Moses!” And he said, “Here I am.” Then he said, “**Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy (qodesh) ground.**” And he said, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. (Exodus 3:1-6 ESV; see also Joshua 5:13-15, Acts 7:30-33)

The Tabernacle and its contents were made holy by the presence of God:

... the entrance of **the tent of meeting** before [YHWH], where I will meet with you, to speak to you there. There I will meet with the people of Israel, and **it shall be sanctified (qadash) by my glory. I will consecrate (qadash) the tent of meeting and the altar.**

Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and **the glory of [YHWH] filled the tabernacle**. And **Moses was not able to enter** the tent of meeting because the cloud settled on it, and the glory of [YHWH] filled the tabernacle. (Exodus 29:42b-44a, 40:34-35 ESV; see also 1 Kings 8:10-11 // 2 Chronicles 5:13b-14)

Near the end of the wilderness period, Moses was at his wits end with the complaining of the people – there was no water, so Moses went to YHWH:

Then Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly to the entrance of the tent of meeting and fell on their faces. And the glory of [YHWH] appeared to them and **[YHWH] spoke to Moses**, saying, “Take the staff, and assemble the congregation, you and Aaron your brother, and **tell the rock before their eyes to yield its water**. So you shall bring water out of the rock for them and give drink to the congregation and their cattle.” And Moses took the staff from before [YHWH], as he commanded him. (Numbers 20:6-9 ESV)

Moses had always done exactly as God had told him, but **for whatever reason he this time deviated:**

Then **Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly** together before the rock, and **he said to them**, “Hear now, you rebels: **shall we bring water for you out of this rock?**” And **Moses lifted up his hand and struck the rock with his staff twice**, and water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their livestock.

And **[YHWH] said to Moses and Aaron**, “Because **you did not believe in me, to uphold me as holy (qadash)** in the eyes of the people of Israel, therefore **you shall not bring this assembly into the land** that I have given them.”

These are the waters of Meribah, where **the people of Israel quarreled with [YHWH]**, and **through them he showed himself holy (qadash)**. (Numbers 20:10-13 ESV)

This is clearly intended as an object lesson. Moses knew God. His instructions were clear, “**tell the rock.**” Instead of speaking to the “rock”, giving God the glory, he upbraided the people and claimed the miracle to himself, “**shall we bring water for you out of this rock.**” Then he struck the rock with the staff. YHWH identified this as lacking faith, “**you did not believe in me**”, and failure to acknowledge God’s holiness. **The object lesson is that circumstances do NOT matter, God’s holiness is paramount.**

¹¹⁶ See Exodus 28:1-43, 39:1-31

¹¹⁷ See Exodus 29:1-28, Leviticus 8:14-36

¹¹⁸ See Leviticus chapters one through seven

¹¹⁹ This is a manifestation of God, see the Bible study notes, “The Angel of YHWH” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

The people's rebellion was NOT a justification for Moses' exasperation. Moses had always meticulously done God's will – he should NOT have gotten sloppy. In all things, the glory is to be given to God.

The **Prophet Isaiah** concurs:

But [YHWH] of hosts is exalted in [justness] (mish'pat),
and the Holy (qadosh) God shows himself holy (qadosh) in righteousness (tz'daqah). (Isaiah 5:16 ESV)

For True Worshipers of God, it is critical to always recognize and acknowledge the holiness of God:

Sing unto [YHWH], O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness (qodesh).

Rejoice in [YHWH], ye righteous; and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness (qodesh).

(Psalms 30:4¹²⁰, 97:12 Old King James)

When God speaks his word is holy:

I will not violate my covenant or alter the word that went forth from my lips.

Once for all I have sworn by my holiness (qodesh); I will not lie to David.

His offspring shall endure forever, his throne as long as the sun before me.

Like the moon it shall be established forever, a faithful witness in the skies (shaḥaq)."

(Psalm 89:34-37 ESV see also 60:6 // 108:7, Jeremiah 23:9, Amos 4:2)

Grace חַנּוּן - ḥanan

As was discussed briefly in the introduction to section **1.4 What is God**, the fundamental principle of God's dealings with human beings is "grace". The verbal root חָנַן - ḥanan, carries a range of meaning including "be gracious", "show pity", "have compassion". From a spiritual perspective, it is God who is the one extending the "grace", but a person can also extend ḥanan to another person. The most important derivatives are חֵן - ḥen, a masculine noun, and חַנּוּן - ḥannun, an adjective. The focus of ḥen is the recipient. With ḥen, the extender of the "grace" or "favour" is often a person. In most uses of ḥannun, it refers to God, for example:

If ever you take your neighbor's cloak in pledge, you shall return it to him before the sun goes down, for that is his only covering, and it is his cloak for his body; in what else shall he sleep? And if he cries to me, I will hear, for I am compassionate (hannun). (Exodus 22:26-27 ESV)

Two of the **seminal scriptures on the Nature of God** exemplify the use of noun ḥen, the adjective ḥannun, and the verb ḥanan: (as well as several other words describing attributes of the Nature of God)

Moses said to [YHWH], "See, you say to me, 'Bring up this people,' but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. Yet you have said, 'I know you by name, and you have also found favor (hen) in my sight.' Now therefore, if I have found favor (hen) in your sight, please show me now your ways, that I may know you in order to find favor (hen) in your sight. Consider too that this nation is your people."

And he said, "My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest." And he said to him, "If your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here. For how shall it be known that I have found favor (hen) in your sight, I and your people? Is it not in your going with us, so that we are distinct, I and your people, from every other people on the face of the earth?"

And [YHWH] said to Moses, "This very thing that you have spoken I will do, for you have found favor (hen) in my sight, and I know you by name."

Moses said, "Please show me your glory." And he said, "I will make all my goodness (tuv) pass before you and will proclaim before you my name '[YHWH]'. And I will be gracious (hanan) to whom I will be gracious (hanan), and will show mercy (raham) on whom I will show mercy (raham)." (Exodus 33:12-19 ESV)

[YHWH] descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of [YHWH]. [YHWH] passed before him and proclaimed, "[YHWH], [YHWH], a God merciful (raham) and gracious (hannun), slow to anger ('erek 'aphayim), and abounding in [hesed] and faithfulness ('emeth), keeping [hesed] for thousands, forgiving (nasa') iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation." (Exodus 34:5-7 ESV)

A third seminal scripture is alluded to, "visiting the iniquity of the fathers" – the second commandment: You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous (ganna') God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing [hesed] to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments. (Exodus 20:4-6 ESV // Deuteronomy 5:8-10)

¹²⁰ See also ESV footnote
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The principle operative mechanism in God's dealing with human beings is "grace". Moses appeals to God's grace to restore the relationship with Israel, "**you have found favor (hen) in my sight**", "**is it not in your going with us, so that we are distinct**". Moses further appeals to God for greater personal understanding of the Nature of God and the Way of God, "**please show me now your ways, that I may know you**". God affirms his grace to Moses, "**you have found favor (hen) in my sight**", and promises further revelation, "**this very thing that you have spoken I will do**".

Note: these seminal scriptures are referenced in several of the following sections.

Goodness טוב - tov

In Exodus chapter thirty-three, Moses gets ahead of himself and asks to see God in his glory, "**please show me your glory**". To this, YHWH responds by promising to reveal some vital characteristic of his nature, "**I will make all my goodness (tuv) pass before you**". The word טוב - tuv, is a masculine noun derived from the verbal root טוב - tov. There is also a feminine noun טובָה - tovah. The spelling טוב - tov, can function as a verb or an adjective. The range of meaning of all the words is very similar to the English words "good", "goodness", or "do good". **God's "goodness" is an overall summary of his character** – it is contrasted with "glory" because God cannot reveal his "glory" to Moses; but, understanding God's "goodness" is more important.

King David appealed to God's "goodness" in requesting forgiveness:

Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions;
according to your [hesed] remember me, **for the sake of your goodness (tuv)**, [YHWH]!
Good (tov) and upright (yashar) is [YHWH]; therefore he instructs sinners in the way.
(Psalm 25:7-8 ESV; see also Jeremiah 33:11, 1 Chronicles 16:34, 2 Chronicles 5:13, Ezra 3:11)

Further, David declares that **God's "goodness" is manifest in his in his "awesome deeds"**:

On the glorious splendor of your majesty, and **on your wondrous works**, I will meditate.
They shall speak of **the might of your awesome deeds**, and I will declare your greatness.
They shall pour forth **the fame of your abundant goodness (tuv)**
and shall sing aloud of your righteousness (tzedaqah). (Psalm 145:5-7 ESV)

Mercy רַחֵם - raham

In Exodus chapter thirty-three, God promises Moses that he will reveal to Moses his nature, "**proclaim before you my name**"; but, YHWH then goes straight to the concept of "election",¹²¹ "**I will be gracious (hanan) to whom I will be gracious (hanan), and will show mercy (raham) on whom I will show mercy (raham)**". It is purely at God's discretion to whom he will extend grace and mercy at any given time. "**Grace**" (hanan) has already been discussed. **God's mercy (raham) is the natural corollary of his grace**. The verbal root רַחַם - raham, the related adjective רַחֻם - rahum, and the related masculine noun רַחֲמִים - rahamim, all carry the same range of meaning, "mercy", "pity", "compassion", "be merciful".

Fundamental to the Nature of God is that he is merciful:

For [YHWH] your God is **a merciful (rahum) God**. (Deuteronomy 4:31a ESV)
Then David said to Gad, "I am in great distress. Let us fall into the hand of [YHWH],
for **his mercy (rahamim) is great**; but let me not fall into the hand of man."
(2 Samuel 24:14 ESV // 1 Chronicles 21:13)
Gracious (hannun) is [YHWH], and righteous (tzaddiq); our **God is merciful (raham)**. (Psalm 116:5 ESV)
The [hesed] of [YHWH] never ceases; **his mercies (rahamim) never come to an end**;
(Lamentations 3:22 ESV)
Therefore [YHWH] waits to be gracious (hanan) to you,
and therefore **he exalts himself to show mercy (raham) to you**.
For [YHWH] is a God of [justness] (mishpat); blessed are all those who wait for him. (Isaiah 30:18 ESV)
"For a brief moment I deserted you, but **with great compassion (rahamim) I will gather you**.
In overflowing anger for a moment I hid my face from you,
but **with everlasting ('olam) [hesed] I will have compassion (raham) on you**",
says [YHWH], your Redeemer.

¹²¹ The concept of "election" is discussed in section **2.3.1 Election**, in the paper "**Second Pillar - The Plan of God**" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

“... For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed,
but my [hesed] shall not depart from you,
and my covenant of peace shall not be removed,”
says [YHWH], **who has compassion (raham) on you.** (Isaiah 54:7-8, 10 ESV)

In Exodus chapter thirty-four, YHWH soon fulfilled his promise to Moses and “**proclaimed the name of [YHWH]**” - “[YHWH], [YHWH], a God merciful (raham) and gracious (hannun), **slow to anger (‘erek ‘aphayim)**, and **abounding in [hesed] and faithfulness (‘emeth).**” This phrase became **an epithet for the Nature of God** – David quotes it once completely; it is quoted several times almost completely, and many times partially:

But you, O Lord, are a God merciful (raham) and gracious (hannun),
slow to anger (‘erek ‘aphayim) and **abounding in [hesed] and faithfulness (‘emeth).** (Psalm 86:15 ESV)

[YHWH] is **merciful (raham)** and **gracious (hannun)**,
slow to anger (‘erek ‘aphayim) and **abounding in [hesed]**.
(Psalm 103:8 ESV; see also 145:8, Joel 2:13, Jonah 4:2)

He has caused his wondrous works to be remembered;
[YHWH] is **gracious (hannun) and merciful (raham).** (Psalm 111:4; see also 112:4, 116:5)

But you are a God ready to forgive, **gracious (hannun) and merciful (raham)**,
slow to anger (‘erek ‘aphayim) and **abounding in [hesed]**, and did not forsake them.
(Nehemiah 9:17b ESV; see also 9:31, 2 Chronicles 30:9)

Slow to Anger אֶרֶךְ אַפַּיִם - ‘erek ‘aphayim

The phrase “**slow to anger (‘erek ‘aphayim)**” is a **Hebrew idiom**. The verbal root אָפַח - ‘anaph means “to be angry”, “to be displeased”. The derivative masculine noun אָפַח - ‘aph, can apply to various body parts, but most often the nose. The plural אֶפְפַּיִם - ‘aphayim, refers to the nostrils. When angry, a person’s nostrils tend to flare; hence, the association with anger. The adjective אֶרֶךְ - ‘erek means “long of”. **The idiom is literally “long of nostrils”, “long of anger”; therefore, “slow to anger”.** Some examples are:

[YHWH] is slow to anger (‘erek ‘aphayim) and abounding in [hesed], forgiving iniquity and transgression, but he will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, to the third and the fourth generation. (Numbers 14:18 ESV see also Nehemiah 9:17)

But you, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, **slow to anger (‘erek ‘aphayim)** and abounding in [hesed] and faithfulness. (Psalm 86:15 ESV see also 103:8, 145:8)

Return to [YHWH] your God, for he is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger (‘erek ‘aphayim), and abounding in [hesed]; and he relents over disaster.
(Joel 2:13b ESV see also Jonah 4:2, Nahum 1:3)

Faithfulness אָמֵן - ‘aman

The next extremely important word used in the epithet is **faithfulness**, אֱמֶת - ‘emeth, a feminine noun derived from the verbal root אָמַן - ‘aman, which carries a range of meaning including “faithfulness”, “truthfulness”, “trustworthy”. The derived feminine noun אֱמוּנָה - ‘emunah, also means “faithfulness”. The verbal root has several other derivative words, but *‘emeth* and *‘emunah* are the two that relate to the Nature of God. The various verb forms mostly are used for humans trusting or having faith in God; however, there are a few exceptions, for example:

Know therefore that **[YHWH] your God is God, the faithful (‘aman) God** who keeps covenant and [hesed] with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations ...
(Deuteronomy 7:9 ESV)

Thus says [YHWH], the Redeemer of Israel and his Holy One (qadosh),
to one deeply despised, abhorred by the nation, the servant of rulers:
“Kings shall see and arise; princes, and they shall prostrate themselves;
because of **[YHWH], who is faithful (‘aman)**,
the Holy One (qadosh) of Israel, who has chosen you.” (Isaiah 49:7 ESV)

The noun ‘emunah, is very often used as an attribute of God’s character:

For I will proclaim the name of [YHWH]; ascribe greatness to our God!
The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are [justness] (mishpat).
A God of faithfulness (‘emunah) and without iniquity, just (tzaddiq) and upright (yashar) is he.
(Deuteronomy 32:3-4 ESV)

Forever, [YHWH], your word is firmly fixed in the heavens.

Your faithfulness ('emunah) endures to all generations; you have established the earth, and it stands fast.

Righteous (tzaddiq) are you, [YHWH], and right (yashar) are your [mish'patim].

You have appointed your testimonies ('eduth) in righteousness (tzedeq) and **in all faithfulness ('emunah).** (Psalm 119:89-90, 137-138 ESV; see also 33:4-5, 143:1)

The [hesed] of [YHWH] never ceases; his mercies (rah'mim) never come to an end;

they are new every morning; **great is your faithfulness ('emunah).** (Lamentations 3:22-23 ESV)

The quote from Lamentations emphasises a very important concept: **the juxtaposition of hesed with 'emunah**, some further examples are:

Your [hesed], [YHWH], extends to the heavens, **your faithfulness ('emunah)** to the clouds.

It is good to give thanks to [YHWH], to sing praises to your name, O Most High;
to **declare your [hesed]** in the morning, and **your faithfulness ('emunah)** by night ...

[YHWH] has made known his salvation;

he has revealed his righteousness (tz'daqah) **in the sight of the nations.**

He has remembered his [hesed] and faithfulness ('emunah) to the house of Israel.

All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

(Psalm 36:5, 92:1-2, 98:2-3 ESV; see also 100:5)

The passage from Psalm 98 brings out two very important points:

1. **God will reveal his nature to all human beings over the whole earth** in the World Tomorrow:

He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear,
but with **righteousness (tzedeq)** he shall judge the poor,
and decide with **equity (mishor)** for the meek of the earth;
and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,
and with the breath of his lips she shall kill the wicked.

Righteousness (tzedeq) shall be the belt of his waist,
and **faithfulness ('emunah) the belt of his loins.**

(Isaiah 11:3b-5 ESV; see also Hosea 2:18-20, Psalm 96:11-13)

2. The character attributes *hesed* and *'emunah* / *'emeth* are used as **a hendiadys to circumscribe the Nature of God** – God's love for human beings is expressed by *hesed*. **God's unfailing commitment to the covenant** is implied by *hesed*. God's commitment, his faithfulness, is expressed by *'emunah* / *'emeth*. All other character attributes of God are implied by the hendiadys. The foundation of God's nature is *hesed*. Once committed to a covenant relationship, God will do everything in his power to make the covenant relationship work, *'emunah* / *'emeth*:

(1) I will sing of **the [hesed] of [YHWH],** forever;
with my mouth **I will make known your faithfulness ('emunah)** to all generations.

(2) For I said, "**[hesed]** will be built up forever;
in the heavens **you will establish your faithfulness ('emunah).**"

(5) Let the heavens praise your wonders, [YHWH],
your faithfulness ('emunah) in the assembly of the holy ones (q'doshim)!

(6) For who in the skies (sha'haq) can be compared to [YHWH]?

Who among the [God Family] ('elim) is like [YHWH],

(7) a God greatly to be feared in the council of the holy ones (q'doshim),
and awesome above all who are around him?

(8) [YHWH] God of hosts, who is mighty as you are, [YHWH],
with your faithfulness ('emunah) all around you?

(19) Of old you spoke in a vision to your godly one, and said:

I have granted help to one who is mighty;
I have exalted one chosen from the people.

(24) **My faithfulness ('emunah) and my [hesed] shall be with him,**
and **in my name shall his horn be exalted.**

(27) And I will make him the firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth.

(28) My **[hesed]** I will keep for him forever,
and **my covenant** will stand firm for him.

(33) ... but **I will not remove** from him **my [hesed]**
or **be false to my faithfulness ('emunah).**

(34) **I will not violate my covenant** or alter the word that went forth from my lips.

(49) Lord, where is your **hesed** of old,
which **by your faithfulness ('emunah) you swore to David?**
(Psalm 89:1-2, 5-8, 19, 24, 27-28, 33-34, 49 ESV)

Psalms 89 could be entitled “**An Ode to God’s Faithfulness**”. The main theme of the Psalm is the Covenant of Messianic Descent made by God with David.¹²² The above excerpts from Psalm 89 make clear the covenantal nature of *hesed*, and **the relationship of the “faithfulness” of God to hesed**. In verses one and two, **the Psalmist twice uses hesed and 'emunah in a hendiadys relationship**. In verses five through eight, the Psalmist establishes *'emunah* as fundamental in God’s dealings with the God Family. Verses nineteen and twenty-four are addressed to David, but the **“horn to be exalted”** is the Messiah; as is clear from verses twenty-seven and twenty-eight. Verses thirty-three and thirty-four confirm God’s faithfulness in his commitment, *hesed*, to the covenant. In verse forty-nine, the Psalmist pleads with God to accomplish his purpose, **again using hesed and 'emunah in a hendiadys relationship**.

The feminine noun *'emeth* carries a similar range of meaning as *'emunah* – it is frequently best translated by “true” or “truth”.¹²³ **In relation to the Nature of God, his words, his teaching are 'emeth:**

And now, O Lord [YHWH], you are God, and **your words are true ('emeth)**, and you have promised this good thing to your servant. (2 Samuel 7:28 ESV)

And the woman said to Elijah, “Now I know that you are a man of God, and that **the word of [YHWH] in your mouth is truth ('emeth)**.” (1 Kings 17:24 ESV see also Psalm 119:43)

You came down on Mount Sinai and spoke with them from heaven and gave them right (*yashar*) [*mish'patim*] and **true ('emeth) [torah]**, good (*tov*) statutes and commandments ... (Nehemiah 9:13 ESV see also Psalm 119:142, Malachi 2:6)

... the fear of [YHWH] is clean, enduring forever;
the **[mish'patim] of [YHWH] are true ('emeth)**, and righteous (*tzadaq*) altogether. (Psalm 19:9 ESV)

But you are near, [YHWH], and **all your commandments are true ('emeth)**. (Psalm 119:151)

The sum of your word is truth ('emeth) ... (Psalm 119:160a ESV)

YHWH is the True God and when he acts, he does it in truth, in faithfulness:

For a long time Israel was without **the true ('emeth) God**, and without a teaching priest and without [*torah*] ... (2 Chronicles 15:3 ESV)

But **[YHWH] is the true ('emeth) God**; he is the living God and the everlasting King. (Jeremiah 10:10a ESV)

If you return, O Israel, declares [YHWH], to me you should return.

If you remove your detestable things from my presence, and do not waver,
and if you swear, **‘As [YHWH] lives,’ in truth ('emeth), in [justness] (mish'pat),**
and **in righteousness (tz'edeqah)**,

then nations shall bless themselves in him, and in him shall they glory. (Jeremiah 4:1-2 ESV)

The works of his hands are faithful ('emeth) and just (mish'pat);

all his precepts are trustworthy; they are established forever and ever,
to be performed with faithfulness ('emeth) and uprightness (yashar). (Psalm 111:7-8 ESV)

He will not cry aloud or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street;

a bruised reed he will not break, and a faintly burning wick he will not quench;¹²⁴

he will faithfully ('emeth) bring forth justice (mish'pat).¹²⁵ (Isaiah 42:2-3 ESV)

Thus says [YHWH] of hosts: Behold, **I will save my people** from the east country and from the west country, and I will bring them to dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. And they shall be my people, and **I will be their God, in faithfulness ('emeth) and in righteousness (tz'edeqah)**. (Zechariah 8:7-8 ESV)

Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose **hope is in [YHWH] his God,**
who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, **who keeps faith ('emeth) forever;**
who executes justice (*mish'pat*) for the oppressed, who gives food to the hungry. (Psalm 146:5-7)

Righteousness תְּצַדֵּק - tzadaq

Moving on to the concept of “righteousness”, the verbal root תְּצַדֵּק - tzadaq, has a related masculine noun, תְּצַדֵּק - tzedeq, a related feminine noun, תְּצַדִּיקָה - tz'edeqah, and a related adjective, תְּצַדִּיק -

¹²² For a discussion of this covenant, see section 7. *The Covenant of Descent*, in the paper “Covenants of Grace” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

¹²³ Note that the hendiadys relationship with *hesed* is also frequently used with *'emeth*: see Genesis 24:27, 32:10, 2 Samuel 2:6, 15:20, Psalms 25:10, 40:10-11, 57:3, 10, 61:7, 69:13, 85:10-11, 86:15, 89:14, 108:4, 138:2, Isaiah 16:5

¹²⁴ A Messianic prophecy of the First Advent

¹²⁵ A Messianic prophecy of the Second Advent

tzaddiq. All these words carry a similar range of meaning “rightness”, “lawful”, “just”, “justice” – with respect to the Nature of God, the meaning is usually “to be righteous” or “righteousness”. The various forms of the verb are most often used of human beings standing in “righteousness” before God. For example, **Solomon prays that God will bless the Temple with his presence by rendering justice:**

If a man sins against his neighbor and is made to take an oath and comes and swears his oath before your altar in this house, then hear in heaven and act and **judge your servants**, condemning the guilty by bringing his conduct on his own head, and **vindicating (tzadaq) the righteous (tzaddiq) by rewarding him according to his righteousness (tzedaqah)**. (1 Kings 8:31-32 ESV // 2 Chronicles 6:22-23)

An interesting exception is **David’s prayer of repentance:**

(2) **Wash me thoroughly** from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin!

(3) For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.

(4) **Against you, you only, have I sinned** and done what is evil in your sight, **so that you may be justified (tzadaq) in your words** and blameless in your judgment. (Psalm 51:2-4 ESV)

The protasis begins in verse two and extends through the first half of verse four. David pleads to be cleansed from the stain of his sin, “**wash me thoroughly**”. He acknowledges his guilt, “**against you, you only, have I sinned**”, but more importantly, the apodosis, the second half of verse four, the reason why God should forgive him is because of God’s promise, “**you may be justified (tzadaq) in your words**”. **David claims God’s promise of grace** – the only real reason why God should forgive any human being. The fulfilling of his promise brings *tzadaq* on God, it reflects his own righteousness back onto himself.

As was briefly discussed in section **1.4.1 God is Holy**, “righteousness” is more or less equivalent to “holiness”. **Only God is truly righteous:**

Answer me when I call, O **God of My Righteousness (tzedeq)**! (Psalm 4:1a ESV)

From the ends of the earth we hear songs of praise, of **glory to the Righteous One (tzaddiq)**. (Isaiah 24:16a ESV; see also 53:11)

[YHWH] has made known his salvation;

he has revealed his righteousness (tzedaqah) in the sight of the nations. (Psalm 98:2 ESV)

But [YHWH] of hosts is exalted in [justness] (mishpat),

and **the Holy (qadosh) God shows himself holy (qadosh) in righteousness (tzedaqah)**. (Isaiah 5:16 ESV)

Gracious (hannun) is [YHWH], and **righteous (tzaddiq)**; our God is merciful (rahum).

(Psalm 116:5 ESV see also 119:137, 129:4, 145:17)

And you have kept your promise, for **you are righteous (tzaddiq)**. ... Yet **you have been righteous (tzaddiq)** in all that has come upon us, for you have dealt faithfully (‘emeth) and we have acted wickedly. (Nehemiah 9:8b, 33 ESV)¹²⁶

Everything about God is “righteous”. **General revelation**¹²⁷ testifies to God’s righteousness, as do his **dealings with human beings:**

The heavens declare his righteousness (tzedeq), for God himself is judge! (Psalm 50:6 ESV)

The heavens proclaim his righteousness (tzedeq), and all the peoples see his glory. (Psalm 97:6 ESV)

Your righteousness (tzedaqah) is like the mountains of God;

your [mishpatim] are like the great deep; man and beast you save, [YHWH]. (Psalm 36:6 ESV)

Shower, O heavens, from above, and **let the clouds rain down righteousness (tzedeq)**;

let the earth open, that **salvation and righteousness (tzedaqah) may bear fruit**;

let the earth cause them both to sprout; I [YHWH] have created it. (Isaiah 45:8 ESV)

As your name, O God, so your praise reaches to the ends of the earth.

Your right hand is filled with righteousness (tzedeq). (Psalm 48:10 ESV; see also Isaiah 41:10)

The Almighty—we cannot find him; he is great in power;

[justness] (mishpat) and abundant **righteousness (tzedeq) he will not violate**. (Job 37:23 ESV)

In you, [YHWH], do I take refuge; let me never be put to shame!

In your righteousness (tzedaqah) deliver me and rescue me; incline your ear to me, and save me!

My mouth will tell of **your righteous acts (tzedaqah)**,

of your deeds of salvation all the day, for their number is past my knowledge.

With the mighty deeds of the Lord [YHWH] I will come;

I will remind them of **your righteousness (tzedaqah)**, yours alone.

Your righteousness (tzedaqah), O God, reaches the high heavens.

¹²⁶ See also 2 Chronicles 12:6, Ezra 9:15, Jeremiah 12:1, Lamentations 1:18, Daniel 9:14, Zephaniah 3:5

¹²⁷ See section **3.2 General Revelation**, in the paper “**Third Pillar - The Way of God**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicresearch.ca.

You who have done great things, O God, who is like you?
And my tongue will talk of **your righteous help (tz'daqah)** all the day long,
for they have been put to shame and disappointed who sought to do me hurt.
(Psalm 71:1-2, 15-16, 19, 24 ESV)

Because God is righteous, he loves righteousness, and God expects those he calls to strive towards his righteousness:

[YHWH] is in his holy temple; [YHWH's] throne is in heaven (shamayim);
his eyes see, his eyelids test the children of man.

[YHWH] tests the righteous (tzaddiq) ...

For [YHWH] is righteous (tzaddiq); he loves righteous (tz'daqah) deeds;
the upright (yashar) shall behold his face. (Psalm 11:4-5a, 7 ESV see also 33:4-5 146:8)

Thus says [YHWH]: "Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, but **let him who boasts boast in this**, that he understands and knows me, that **I am [YHWH] who practices [hesed], [justness] (mish'pat), and righteousness (tz'daqah)** in the earth. For **in these things I delight, declares [YHWH]**." (Jeremiah 9:23-24 ESV)

Uprightness יָשָׁר - yashar

Very closely related to the concept of "righteousness" is the concept of "uprightness". The verbal root יָשָׁר - yashar, literally means "to go straight or direct in the way", "to make a way straight". Ethically, and perhaps metaphorically, "uprightness", "blamelessness", is implied. The most important derivative words are the adjective יָשָׁר - yashar, the masculine noun יֹשֶׁר - yosher, the masculine noun מִישׁוֹר - mishor, and its plural מִישָׁרִים - mesharim. From an ethical perspective, all these words carry the meaning "uprightness".

The root *tzadaq*, and all the words derived from it relate to "righteousness", which is a character attribute of the inner-most being. **God is inherently righteous**. He requires true worshippers to understand the concept of "righteousness" and strive to incorporate righteousness into their innermost being. But, as human beings, we cannot be truly righteous so God provides the **gift of faith**¹²⁸ through which he can account us righteous.¹²⁹ Through the **sacrifice of Jesus Christ**, God can then account human beings "holy"¹³⁰ so that **it is possible to have relationship with him**. **The concept of "uprightness", contained in the root yashar, and its related words, is the outward expression of "righteousness"**. God is inherently *yashar* in all his doings:

The Rock, **his work is perfect**, for all his ways are [justness] (mish'pat).

A God of faithfulness ('emunah) and without iniquity, just (tzaddiq) and **upright (yashar) is he**.
(Deuteronomy 32:4 ESV)

Good (tov) and **upright (yashar) is [YHWH]**; (Psalm 25:8a ESV)

... declare that [YHWH] is upright (yashar);

he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him. (Psalm 92:15 ESV)

The works of his hands are faithful ('emeth) and just (mish'pat);
all his precepts are trustworthy ('aman); they are established forever ('ad) and ever ('olam),
to be performed with faithfulness ('emeth) and uprightness (yashar). (Psalm 111:7-8 ESV)

Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for **you judge the peoples with equity (mishor)**
and guide the nations upon earth. (Psalm 67:4 ESV)

But [YHWH] sits enthroned forever ('olam); he has established his throne for justice (mish'pat),
and he judges the world with righteousness (tzedeq);

he judges the peoples with uprightness (mesharim). (Psalm 9:7-8 ESV see also 75:2, 96:10, 98:9)

Your throne, O God, is forever and ever.

The scepter of your kingdom is **a scepter of uprightness (mishor)**;
you have loved righteousness (tzedeq) and hated wickedness. (Psalm 45:6-7a ESV)

Whoever is wise, let him understand these things; whoever is discerning, let him know them;
for **the ways of [YHWH] are right (yashar)**, and the upright (tzaddiq) walk in them,
but transgressors stumble in them. (Hosea 14:9 ESV)

¹²⁸ See 1 Corinthians 12:4,9, Ephesians 2:8

¹²⁹ See Romans 3:22, 4:3,5,9,22, Galatians 3:6, Hebrews 11:7, James 2:23

¹³⁰ See the discussion in section 6. *Holiness*, of the paper "To Be a Priest" located at www.mikwhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

The “uprightness” of God is reflected in his teaching, the Way of God, by which he expects True

Worshippers to live:

Lead me, [YHWH], in your righteousness (tz^edaqah) because of my enemies;

make your way straight (yashar) before me. (Psalm 5:8 ESV)

Teach me your way, [YHWH], and **lead me on a level (mishor) path** because of my enemies.

(Psalm 27:11 ESV)

The path of the righteous (tzaddiq) is level (mesarim);

you make level (yashar) the way of the righteous (tzaddiq).

In the path of your [mish^epatim], [YHWH], we wait for you; (Isaiah 26:7-8a ESV)

For **the word of [YHWH] is upright (yashar)**, and all his work is done in faithfulness (‘emunah).

(Psalm 33:4 ESV)

I [YHWH] speak the truth (tzedeq); **I declare what is right (mesarim).** (Isaiah 45:19b)

... **the precepts of [YHWH] are right (yashar)**, rejoicing the heart; (Psalm 19:8a ESV see also 119:128)

Righteous (tzaddiq) are you, [YHWH], and **right (yashar) are your [mish^epatim].**

(Psalm 119:137 ESV see also Nehemiah 9:13)

God considers “uprightness” to be a measure of conversion. In fact, the phrase, **“to do that which is right in his eyes”**, is used as an epithet for being a True Worshipper:

Whoever walks in uprightness (yosher) fears [YHWH] ... (Proverbs 14:2a ESV)

I know, my God, that **you test the heart and have pleasure in uprightness (mesarim).**

In the uprightness (yashar) of my heart I have freely offered all these things ... (1 Chronicles 29:17a ESV)

If you will diligently listen to the voice of [YHWH] your God, and **do that which is right (yashar) in his eyes**, and give ear to his commandments and keep all his statutes ...

(Exodus 15:26a ESV; see also Jeremiah 34:15)

... you shall **do what is right (yashar) and good (tov) in the sight of [YHWH]**, that it may go well with you ... (Deuteronomy 6:18a ESV; see also 12:25, 28, 13:18, 21:9)

David did what was right (yashar) in the eyes of the LORD and did not turn aside from anything that he commanded him all the days of his life ... (1 Kings 15:5a ESV; see also 15:11, 11:33, 38, 14:8, 22:43)

... **Hezekiah** the son of Ahaz, king of Judah, began to reign. ... And **he did what was right (yashar) in the eyes of [YHWH]**, according to all that David his father had done.

(2 Kings 18:1b, 3 ESV; see also 10:30, 12:2, 14:3, 15:3, 34, 22:2)

Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem. And **he did what was right (yashar) in the eyes of [YHWH]**, and walked in the ways of David his father; and he did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left.

(2 Chronicles 34:1-2 ESV; see also 14:2, 20:32, 24:2, 25:2, 26:4, 27:2, 29:2)

Forgiving נָסָא - nasa’ and סָלַח - salah

Exodus chapter thirty-four verse seven states that God is **“forgiving (nasa’) iniquity and transgression**

and sin”. The verbal root נָסָא - nasa’ carries a very wide range of meaning including “to lift up”, “to bear, carry, support”, “to take, “take away”. These meanings are applied to sin in the sense of “bearing the sin of another” or “taking away the penalty of sin” – “forgiving” encompasses both of these

meanings. The verbal root סָלַח - salah is far more specific – it is only used for God’s “forgiving” or “pardoning” sin. There is a derivative adjective of salah, סָלֵחַ - sallah, and a feminine noun, סְלִיחָה - s’liḥah.

God’s proclivity to forgive sin is a corollary of his grace and mercy, but as the second commandment states, repentance is required, **“visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing [hesed] to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.”**

When the majority spies bring back an evil report and God prepares to destroy all the people of Israel,

Moses appeals to God’s revelation of his nature:

And now, please let the power of the Lord be great as you have promised, saying, ‘[YHWH] is slow to anger (‘erek ‘aphayim) and abounding in [hesed], **forgiving (nasa’) iniquity and transgression**, but he will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, to the third and the fourth generation.’ Please **pardon (salah) the iniquity of this people**, according to the greatness of your [hesed], **just as you have forgiven (nasa’) this people**, from Egypt until now.” Then [YHWH] said, **“I have pardoned (salah)**, according to your word.

(Numbers 14:17-20 ESV; see also Exodus 32:32, Nehemiah 9:17)

In the specification of the sin offering and the guilt offering, **the animal's blood makes atonement for the sin and thus God can grant forgiveness:**

Thus shall he do with the bull. As he did with **the bull of the sin offering**, so shall he do with this. And **the priest shall make atonement** for them, and **they shall be forgiven (salah)**. ... For **the life of the flesh is in the blood**, and I have given it for you on the altar to make atonement for your [lives], for **it is the blood that makes atonement** by the life.

(Leviticus 4:20, 17:11 ESV see also Leviticus 4:26, 31, 35, 5:10, 13, 16, 18, 6:7)

In his prayer at the dedication of the Temple, **King Solomon** pleads for God to grant forgiveness for the sins of the people.¹³¹ **God is explicit that he will forgive**, but only **upon the repentance of the people:**

Then [YHWH] appeared to Solomon in the night and said to him: **"I have heard your prayer** and have chosen this place for myself as a house of sacrifice. ... **If my people** who are called by my name **humble themselves**, and pray and seek my face and **turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven (shamayim) and will forgive (salah)** their sin and heal their land. Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayer that is made in this place. ..." (2 Chronicles 7:12, 14-15 ESV see also 1 Kings 9:1-9)

David and the later Psalmists confirm God's forgiving nature:

Turn to me and be gracious (hanan) to me, for I am lonely and afflicted.
The troubles of my heart are enlarged; bring me out of my distresses.
Consider my affliction and my trouble, and **forgive (nasa') all my sins**.
(Psalm 25:16-18 ESV; see also 32:1, 85:2, 99:8)

For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving (sallah),
abounding in [hesed] to all who call upon you. (Psalm 86:5 ESV)

Bless [YHWH], O my [being], and forget not all his benefits,
who forgives (salah) all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases ... (Psalm 103:2-3 ESV)

If you, [YHWH], should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?
But **with you there is forgiveness (s'lihah)**, that you may be feared. (Psalm 130:3-4 ESV)

The **Prophet Isaiah** is clear about **God's forgiving nature**, but that forgiveness is predicated on repentance:

Seek [YHWH] while he may be found; call upon him while he is near;
let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts;
let him return to [YHWH], that he may have compassion (raham) on him,
and to **our God**, for he **will abundantly pardon (salah)**. (Isaiah 55:6-7 ESV; see also 2:9, 33:24)

The **Prophet Jeremiah** records **YHWH's desire to forgive** any inhabitant of Jerusalem who would repent:

Run to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, look and take note!
Search her squares to **see if you can find a man**,
one who does justice (mish'pat) and seeks truth ('emunah),
that I may pardon (salah) her.
Though they say, "As [YHWH] lives," ... **they refused to take correction**.
They have made their faces harder than rock; **they have refused to repent**.
How can I pardon (salah) you? (Jeremiah 5:1-2a, 3b, 7aα ESV; see also 36:3)

Jeremiah records **the promise of God that repentance and forgiveness will be foundational** for those who participate in the New Israel:

For **this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days**, declares [YHWH]: I will put my [torah] within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And **I will be their God**, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know [YHWH],' for **they shall all know me**, from the least of them to the greatest, declares [YHWH]. For **I will forgive (salah) their iniquity**, and I will remember their sin no more.
(Jeremiah 31:33-34 ESV; see also 33:8, 50:20)

In his prayer of communal repentance, Daniel beseeches God to forgive the remnant that is to return to Jerusalem:

To us, [YHWH], belongs open shame, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because **we have sinned against you**. **To the Lord our God belong mercy (rahamim) and forgiveness (s'lihah)**, for we have rebelled against him and have not obeyed the voice of [YHWH] our God ... O my God, incline your ear and hear. Open your eyes and see our desolations, and the city that is called by your name. For we do not present our pleas before you because of our righteousness, but **because of your great mercy (rahamim)**. O Lord, hear; **O Lord, forgive (salah)**. O Lord, pay attention and act. Delay not, for your own sake, O my God, because your city and your people are called by your name. (Daniel 9:8-10a, 18-19 ESV)

¹³¹ See 1 Kings 8:30,34,36,39,50, 2 Chronicles 6:21,25,27,30,39

Beneficent יָטַב - yataw and גָּמַל - gamal

Both of these verbal roots carry a broad range of meaning: *yataw* can mean “be well”, “be good”, “be glad”, “be pleasing”; *gamal* can mean “to deal”, “to recompense”, “to benefit”. Human relationships are very often implied by *gamal*; while *yataw* is most often used with an action of God or the human response to an action or teaching of God. Two derivatives of *gamal* are of interest: גְּמוּלָה - *g^emul* and תְּגִמּוּל - *tag^emul*, both masculine nouns.

King David expresses his gratitude for the beneficence of God; he expresses his confidence that God will continue his beneficence; and he prays for beneficence to be extended to Jerusalem:

But I have trusted in your [hesed]; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation.

I will sing to [YHWH], because he has dealt bountifully (gamal) with me.

Bless [YHWH], O my [being], and forget not all his benefits (g^emul) ...

Attend to my cry, for I am brought very low!

The righteous will surround me, for **you will deal bountifully (gamal) with me.**

I will praise the name of God with a song; I will magnify him with thanksgiving.

This will please (yataw) [YHWH] ...

Do good (yataw) to Zion in your good pleasure; build up the walls of Jerusalem;
(Psalms 13:5-6, 103:2, 142:6a, 7b, 69:30-31aα, 51:18 ESV)

Two later Psalmists echo David's prayers:

Gracious (ḥannun) is [YHWH], and righteous (tzaddiq); our God is merciful (raḥam).

[YHWH] preserves the simple; when I was brought low, he saved me.

Return, O my [being], to your rest; for **[YHWH] has dealt bountifully (gamal) with you.**

What shall I render to [YHWH] for all his benefits (tag^emul) to me?

Deal bountifully (gamal) with your servant, that I may live and keep your word.
(Psalms 116:5-7, 12, 119:17 ESV)

The Patriarch Jacob appeals to the beneficence of God expressed by his covenant promises; and, on that basis, appeals to God for protection:

And Jacob said, “**O God of my father Abraham** and God of my father Isaac, **[YHWH] who said to me,** ‘Return to your country and to your kindred, **that I may do you good (yataw).**’ I am not worthy of the least of all the deeds of [hesed] and all the faithfulness (’emeth) that you have shown to your servant, for with only my staff I crossed this Jordan, and now I have become two camps. **Please deliver me** from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau, for I fear him, that he may come and attack me, the mothers with the children. But you said, ‘**I will surely do you good (yataw),** and **make your offspring as the sand of the sea,** which cannot be numbered for multitude.’” (Genesis 32:9-12 ESV)

God's beneficence is integrally tied to the covenants. In his final speeches in the Plains of Moab reported in the Book of Deuteronomy, **Moses repeatedly reminded the people** that covenant commitment was required in order to receive the beneficence:

Therefore you shall **keep his statutes and his commandments,** which I command you today, **that it may go well (yataw)** with you and with your children after you, and that you may prolong your days in the land that the LORD your God is giving you for all time.

Oh that they had such a heart as this always, **to fear me and to keep all my commandments, that it might go well (yataw)** with them and with their descendants forever!

And you shall **do what is right and good in the sight of [YHWH], that it may go well (yataw)** with you, and that you may go in and **take possession of the good land** that [YHWH] swore to give to your fathers by thrusting out all your enemies from before you, **as [YHWH] has promised.**
(Deuteronomy 4:40, 5:29, 6:18-19 ESV; see also 5:16, 6:3, 12:25, 28, 22:7)

Just before the final destruction of the Nation of Israel, the **Prophet Jeremiah** takes up the same refrain reminding the people that it was their sins which withheld the blessings:

But this command I gave them: ‘**Obey my voice,** and I will be your God, and you shall be my people. And **walk in all the way that I command you, that it may be well (yataw) with you.**’ But they did not obey or incline their ear, but walked in their own counsels and the stubbornness of their evil hearts, and went backward and not forward.

And if at any time I declare concerning a nation or a kingdom that I will build and plant it, and **if it does evil in my sight,** not listening to my voice, then **I will relent of the good (tovah) that I had intended to do (yataw) to it.** Now, therefore, say to the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem: ‘Thus says [YHWH], Behold, I am shaping disaster against you and devising a plan against you. Return, every one

from his evil way, and **amend (yatav) your ways and your deeds.**
(Jeremiah 7:23-24, 18:10-11 ESV; see also 38:20, 40:9, 42:6)

Jeremiah later records the promise of God that he will create a New Israel and provide them with the blessings denied the Ancient Nation:

Behold, **I will gather them from all the countries** to which I drove them in my anger and my wrath and in great indignation. **I will bring them back to this place**, and I will make them dwell in safety. And **they shall be my people**, and **I will be their God**. I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me forever, for their own good (tov) and the good¹³² of their children after them. **I will make with them an everlasting covenant**, that **I will not turn away from doing good (yatav) to them**. And I will put the fear of me in their hearts, that they may not turn from me. **I will rejoice in doing them good (yatav)**, and I will plant them in this land in faithfulness (’emeth), with all my heart and all my [being].
(Jeremiah 32:37-41 ESV)

In fact, it was **through Moses, in the Covenant of Life, that God first made the promise** of restoration and subsequent provision of beneficence:

And **when all these things come upon you**, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before you, and **you call them to mind** among all the nations where [YHWH] your God has driven you, and **return to [YHWH] your God**, you and your children, and **obey his voice** in all that I command you today, with all your heart and with all your [being], then **[YHWH] your God will restore your fortunes and have mercy (raham) on you**, and **he will gather you** again from all the peoples where [YHWH] your God has scattered you. If your outcasts are in the uttermost parts of heaven, from there [YHWH] your God will gather you, and from there he will take you. And **[YHWH] your God will bring you into the land** that your fathers possessed, that you may possess it. And **he will make you more prosperous (yatav) and numerous than your fathers**. (Deuteronomy 30:1-5 ESV)

Which brings us to **the ultimate expression of God’s beneficence – the Covenant Blessings** of Leviticus chapter twenty-six and Deuteronomy chapter twenty-eight. These blessings are formally part of the Covenant Documentation associated with the Sinai Covenant. By the Sinai Covenant, God contracted to deliver these blessings to Israel for obedience; and, similarly, the attendant curses were required by the covenant for disobedience. This covenant agreement was the basis for the destruction of the Nation of Israel.

The blessings and the curses are, in fact, much more than just an adjunct to the Sinai Covenant – **they are eternal principles which define automatic results of obeying the Way of God or living contrary to the Way of God**. Any people or nation that lives by the Way of God, will accrue these blessings. The more a nation or a people deviates from the Way of God, the more the curses will plague them. **This is implied by the verbs in Deuteronomy:**

And if you faithfully obey the voice of [YHWH] your God, being careful to do all his commandments that I command you today, [YHWH] your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth. And **all these blessings shall come (bo’) upon you and overtake (nasag) you**, if you obey the voice of [YHWH] your God. But if you will not obey the voice of [YHWH] your God or be careful to do all his commandments and his statutes that I command you today, then **all these curses shall come (bo’) upon you and overtake (nasag) you**. (Deuteronomy 28:1-2, 15 ESV)

The verb בּוֹא - bo’, is the normal word for “to go” or “to come”.¹³³ In theological sense it is frequently used in the sense of God’s promise or word coming to fulfilment:

... on every occasion when bo’ is used of God’s word or purpose it has the force of “come to pass” or “come true” ... (TWOT page 94)

The verb נָסַג - nasag, means “to overtake” or “take hold upon”.¹³⁴ The implication is movement, automatic action:

Its semantic range ... lays stress on attainment, achievement, procurement. (TWOT page 603)

The use of these two verbs together clearly implies automatic application of the blessing for obedience and the curse for disobedience. **The blessings are a powerful statement of the beneficence of God:**

If you walk in my statutes and observe my commandments and do them, then **I will give you your rains in their season**, and **the land shall yield its increase**, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit. Your threshing shall last to the time of the grape harvest, and the grape harvest shall last to the time for

¹³² This word is supplied by the translator based on the previous tov.

¹³³ See TWOT article 212 pages 93-95

¹³⁴ See TWOT article 1422 pages 602-603

sowing. And **you shall eat your bread to the full** and **dwelt in your land securely**. **I will give peace** in the land, and you shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid. And I will remove harmful beasts from the land, and **the sword shall not go through your land**.

I will turn to you and make you fruitful and multiply you and will confirm my covenant with you.

I will make my dwelling among you, and my [being] shall not abhor you. And **I will walk among you** and will be your God, and you shall be my people. (Leviticus 26:3-6, 9, 11-12 ESV)

Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the field. **Blessed** shall be the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your ground and the fruit of your cattle, the increase of your herds and the young of your flock. **Blessed** shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. **Blessed** shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out.

[YHWH] will establish you as a people holy to himself, as he has sworn to you, if you keep the commandments of [YHWH] your God and walk in his ways. And **all the peoples of the earth shall see that you are called by the name of [YHWH]**, and they shall be afraid of you. And **[YHWH] will make you abound in prosperity (tovah)**, in the fruit of your womb and in the fruit of your livestock and in the fruit of your ground, within the land that [YHWH] swore to your fathers to give you. [YHWH] will open to you his good (tov) treasury, the heavens, to give the rain to your land in its season and to bless all the work of your hands. And **you shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow**. (Deuteronomy 28:3-6, 9-12 ESV)

The blessings include:

- Agricultural success, **“I will give you your rains in their season”, “the land shall yield its increase”**
- Physical abundance, **“you shall eat your bread to the full”**
- Collective wealth, **“YHWH will make you abound in prosperity”, “you shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow”**
- National security, **“the sword shall not go through your land”**
- Internal peace, **“I will give peace in the land”, “you shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid”**
- Family abundance, **“I will turn to you and make you fruitful and multiply you”, “in the fruit of your womb”**
- Presence of God, **“I will make my dwelling among you”, “YHWH will establish you as a people holy to himself”**

All Knowing יָדָע - yada`

The verbal root יָדָע - yada` means “to know” in both Hebrew and Aramaic. There are a number of derivative nouns which mean “knowledge”: יָדַע - dea`, masculine; דַּעַה - de`ah, feminine; דַּעַת - da`ath, feminine; and in Aramaic,¹³⁵ מַנְדָּע - man`da`, masculine.

The word “omniscient” is often used to describe this characteristic of God. A dictionary definition of omniscient is **“having infinite awareness, understanding, and insight: knowing all things”**. Jesus implied this scope of knowledge in speaking to his disciples with the crowd pressing them, as reported by Luke:

Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? And **not one of them is forgotten before God**. Why, even **the hairs of your head are all numbered**. Fear not; you are of more value than many sparrows. (Luke 12:6-7 ESV)

This **same scope of knowledge** is documented by the **Prophet Isaiah** in Jesus’ words when he was known as YHWH, the Holy One, and a Psalmist concurs:

To whom then will you compare me, that I should be like him? says the Holy One.

Lift up your eyes on high and see: **who created these?**

He who brings out their host by number, **calling them all by name**;

by the greatness of his might and because he is strong in power, **not one is missing**. (Isaiah 40:25-26 ESV)

He determines the number of the stars; he gives to all of them their names.

Great is our Lord, and abundant in power; **his understanding is beyond measure**. (Psalm 147:4-5 ESV)

¹³⁵ See TWOT article 2765a page 1029
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Yet God warns us that **as humans we cannot attain to his level of understanding**; nevertheless, through what God has revealed we can attain some understanding of the divine.¹³⁶

For **my thoughts are not your thoughts**, neither are your ways my ways, declares [YHWH].

For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and **my thoughts than your thoughts**. (Isaiah 55:8-9 ESV)

The secret things belong to [YHWH] our God, but **the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever** ... (Deuteronomy 29:29a ESV)

Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, **to whom belong wisdom and might**.

He changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings;

he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge (man`da`) to those who have understanding;

he reveals deep and hidden things;

he knows (yada`) what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with him.

To you, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise,

for **you have given me wisdom and might**,

and **have now made known (yada`) to me** what we asked of you,

for **you have made known (yada`) to us** the king's matter." (Daniel 2:20-23 ESV)

In the **Book of Job, Elihu's assessment** is on the right track – Elihu upbraids Job for his apparent lack of understanding **the scope of God's knowledge**:

Job speaks without knowledge (da`ath); his words are without insight.

Would that Job were tried to the end, because he answers like wicked men.

For he adds rebellion to his sin;

he claps his hands among us and **multiplies his words against God**.

Job opens his mouth in empty talk; **he multiplies words without knowledge (da`ath)**.

Bear with me a little, and I will show you, for I have yet something to say on God's behalf.

I will get my knowledge (dea`) from afar and ascribe righteousness to **my Maker**.

For truly my words are not false; **one who is perfect in knowledge (de`ah) is with you**.

Behold, **God is mighty**, and does not despise any; he is mighty **in strength of understanding**.

Hear this, O Job; stop and consider the wondrous works of God.

Do you know (yada`) how God lays his command upon them

and causes the lightning of his cloud to shine?

Do you know (yada`) the balancings of the clouds,

the wondrous works of him who is perfect in knowledge (dea`) ...

(Job 34:35-37, 35:16, 36:2-5, 37:14-16 ESV)

The speech of Elihu goes on to recount General Revelation¹³⁷ – the knowledge of God made evident in the creation.¹³⁸ **This is the very tactic God himself uses to show Job his error**, and Job responds favourably.¹³⁹

Then **[YHWH] answered Job** out of the whirlwind and said:

Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge (da`ath)?

Dress for action like a man; I will question you, and **you make it known (yada`)** to me.

Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?

Tell me, if you have understanding.

Where is the way to the dwelling of light, and where is the place of darkness, that you may take it to its territory and **that you may discern** the paths to its home?

You know (yada`), for you were born then, and the number of your days is great!

Do you know (yada`) the ordinances of the heavens? Can you establish their rule on the earth?

Do you know (yada`) when the mountain goats give birth?

Do you observe the calving of the does?

Can you number the months that they fulfill,

and **do you know (yada`) the time when they give birth ...**

Then **Job answered [YHWH]** and said:

I know (yada`) that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.

'Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge (da`ath)?'

Therefore **I have uttered what** I did not understand,

things too wonderful for me, which **I did not know (yada`)**.

'Hear, and I will speak; I will question you, and you make it known (yada`) to me.'

¹³⁶ See also Psalms 131:1, 139:6,17-18, Jeremiah 33:3, Amos 4:7, Isaiah 44:26a, Micah 4:12a, Acts 1:7, 1 Corinthians 13:2,12

¹³⁷ See section **3.2 General Revelation**, in the paper "Third Pillar - The Way of God" located at www.mikewhytebiblicresearch.ca.

¹³⁸ See Job 32:8, 33:4, 34:14-15, 35:2-7, 36:24-33, 37:1-12; see also Psalms eight, nineteen, and 50:1, 145:10-13, Romans 1:18-32

¹³⁹ All of Job chapters 38, 39, 40, and 41 elaborate the theme of General Revelation.

I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you;
therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes.
(Job 38:1-4, 19-21, 33, 39:1-2, 42:1-6 ESV)

The scope of God's understanding and knowledge is as deep as it is broad. **The most important knowledge to God is the "heart", the inner-most being, of those people he calls to conversion.** God "knew" Abraham when he called him, but it was only after many years and many trials that God was satisfied that Abraham "knew" God:¹⁴⁰

[YHWH] said, "**Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do,** seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For **I have known**¹⁴¹ (yada') him, that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of [YHWH] by doing righteousness and [justness] (mish'pat), so that [YHWH] may bring to Abraham what he has promised him."

He said, "Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, **for now I know (yada') that you fear God,** seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me."
(Genesis 18:17-19, 22:12 ESV)

After the golden calf incident,¹⁴² **Moses interceded with God** on behalf of the people. **The basis of Moses' plea was that he, personally, was "known" by God,** i.e., God was satisfied that in Moses' inner-most being, Moses "knew" God. **YHWH confirmed his "knowing" of Moses** and went on to reveal to Moses even deeper understanding of the Nature of God:¹⁴³

The next day Moses said to the people, "You have sinned a great sin. And now I will go up to [YHWH]; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin." So **Moses returned to [YHWH] and said,** "Alas, this people has sinned a great sin. They have made for themselves gods of gold. But now, **if you will forgive their sin**—but if not, please blot me out of your book that you have written."

Moses said to [YHWH], "See, you say to me, 'Bring up this people,' but you have not let me know (yada') whom you will send with me. Yet **you have said, 'I know (yada') you by name,** and you have also found favor in my sight.' ..."

And **[YHWH] said to Moses,** "This very thing that you have spoken I will do, for you have found favor in my sight, and **I know (yada') you by name.**"
(Exodus 32:30-32, 33:12, 17 ESV; see also Deuteronomy 34:10)

In **David's prayer of gratitude** for God's having given him the Promise of Messianic Descent,¹⁴⁴ **David expressly acknowledges that God "knew" him.** In several Psalms, David goes on to elaborate God's "knowing" him:

You have spoken also of your servant's house for a great while to come, and this is instruction for mankind, O Lord [YHWH]! And what more can David say to you? For **you know (yada') your servant,** O Lord [YHWH]! Because of your promise, and according to your own heart, you have brought about all this greatness, **to make your servant know (yada') it.** (2 Samuel 7:19b-21 ESV // 1 Chronicles 17:17b-19)

[YHWH], **you have searched me and known (yada') me!**

You know (yada') when I sit down and when I rise up; **you discern my thoughts from afar.**

You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways.

Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, [YHWH], **you know (yada') it altogether.**

You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me.

Such knowledge (da'ath) is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it.

With my voice I cry out to [YHWH]; with my voice I plead for mercy to [YHWH].

I pour out my complaint before him; I tell my trouble before him.

When my spirit faints within me, **you know (yada') my way!**

(Psalm 139:1-6, 142:1-3a ESV; see also 31:7, 40:9, 69:5, 19, 103:14)

In his **prayer of dedication for the Temple,** **King Solomon** is explicit that God knows the human heart and deals with people based on this knowledge:

... whatever prayer, **whatever plea is made by any man** or by all your people Israel, **each knowing (yada') the affliction of his own heart** and stretching out his hands toward this house, then hear in heaven (shamayim) your dwelling place and forgive and act and **render to each whose heart you know (yada'),**

¹⁴⁰ For further discussion of Abraham and the life lessons he learned, see section 3. *The Covenant of Promise*, in the paper "Covenants of Grace", located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

¹⁴¹ See ESV footnote

¹⁴² See Exodus chapter 32

¹⁴³ See Exodus 33:19-23, 34:3-9

¹⁴⁴ For further discussion of this promise, see section 7. *The Covenant of Descent*, in the paper "Covenants of Grace", and sections 1.4 *King in Jerusalem* and 3.5 *King in Jerusalem*, in the paper "David - A Man After My Own Heart"; both papers are located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

according to all his ways (**for you, you only, know (yada`) the hearts of all the children of mankind**) ... (1Kings 8:38-39 ESV // 2 Chronicles 6:29-30)

David rhetorically questions why God is concerned with “man” in general, and the Prophets **Isaiah** and **Ezekiel** concur that God knows the minds of all people:

[YHWH], **what is man that you regard (yada`) him**, or the son of man that you think of him? (Psalm 144:3 ESV see also 8:4)

For **I know¹⁴⁵ their works and their thoughts**, and the time is coming to gather all nations and tongues. And they shall come and shall see my glory ... (Isaiah 66:18 ESV)

And the Spirit of [YHWH] fell upon me, and he said to me, “Say, **Thus says [YHWH]**: So you think, O house of Israel. For **I know (yada`) the things that come into your mind**. ...” (Ezekiel 11:5 ESV)

The Bible is explicit that **God has taken specific knowledge of individuals that were NOT True Worshippers**. Two of the most graphic examples are God’s dealing with the **Pharaoh of the Exodus** and the prophesized role of **King Cyrus of Persia** many years before he was born:¹⁴⁶

Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt. ... But **I know (yada`) that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless compelled by a mighty hand**.

But **I will harden his heart**, so that he will not let the people go. ... But Pharaoh said, “Who is [YHWH], that I should obey his voice and let Israel go? **I do not know (yada`) [YHWH]**, and moreover, **I will not let Israel go**.” (Exodus 3:10, 19, 4:21b, 5:2 ESV; see also 7:3-4, 13-14, 22-23, 8:15, 19, 32, 9:7, 12, 34-35, 10:1, 20, 27, 11:1, 9-10, 14:4, 8, 17)

I am [YHWH], who made all things, who alone stretched out the heavens, who spread out the earth by myself ...

who says of Cyrus, ‘He is my shepherd, and he shall fulfill all my purpose’;

Thus says [YHWH] to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have grasped, to subdue nations before him ...

I call you by your name, I name you, **though you do not know (yada`) me**.

I am [YHWH], and there is no other, besides me there is no God;

I equip you, **though you do not know (yada`) me**,

that people may know (yada`), from the rising of the sun and from the west, that there is none besides me; **I am [YHWH], and there is no other**.

(Isaiah 44:24b, 28a, 45:1a, 4b-6 ESV; see also 2 Chronicles 36:22-23, Ezra 1:1-4)

God is very careful to be sure he fully knows the heart of a person before he is willing to make a judgement on each person. God “**tests the heart**” of each person:

The whole commandment that I command you today **you shall be careful to do, that you may live** and multiply, and go in and possess the land that [YHWH] swore to give to your fathers. And you shall **remember the whole way** that [YHWH] your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, **that he might humble you, testing you to know (yada`) what was in your heart**, whether you would keep his commandments or not. And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which **you did not know (yada`)**, **nor did your fathers know (yada`)**, that he might **make you know (yada`) that man does not live by bread alone**, but **man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of [YHWH]**. (Deuteronomy 8:1-3 ESV; see also 13:3, Judges 3:4, 2 Chronicles 32:31)

Thus says [YHWH]:

Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, **whose heart turns away from [YHWH]**.

Blessed is the man who trusts in [YHWH], whose trust is [YHWH].

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; **who can understand it?**

I [YHWH] search the heart and test the mind,

to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds.

(Jeremiah 17:5, 7, 9-10 ESV)

An essential part of conversion is God’s self revelation to the person being called. Human beings cannot come to know God without God’s self revelation through the Holy Spirit:¹⁴⁷

Blessed is the man ... [whose] delight is in the [torah] of [YHWH], and on his [torah] he meditates day and night.

for **[YHWH] knows (yada`) the way of the righteous** ... (Psalm 1:1a, 2, 6a ESV)

¹⁴⁵ See ESV footnote: “know”, likely *yada`*, is missing from Masoretic Text.

¹⁴⁶ See also about Sennacherib, Isaiah 37:21-29 // 2 Kings 19:20-28; and, about Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel chapter four.

¹⁴⁷ This topic is discussed in detail in section **3.2.2 The Role of the Holy Spirit**, in the paper “**Third Pillar - The Way of God**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

Oh sing to [YHWH] a new song, for he has done marvelous things!
His right hand and his holy arm have **worked salvation** for him.
[YHWH] has made known (yada') his salvation; (Psalm 98:1-2a ESV)

You make known (yada') to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy;
at your right hand are pleasures **forevermore**. (Psalm 16:11 ESV; see also 25:4, 103:7)

Jealous קנא - qana'

The verbal root קנא - qana' has three associated words: קנא qanna', an adjective;¹⁴⁸

קננו - qanno', an adjective;¹⁴⁹ and קנאה - qina'ah, a feminine noun. The adjectives are used only of God and they imply his "righteous jealousy" for his people and their total commitment to worship only the true God – idolatry being the primary offense. The verb and the noun are frequently used of people, and often in negative sense, i.e., one person's unjustified "jealousy" of another person. **When used of God, they imply either his "righteous jealousy" or his "zeal"** – zeal and righteous jealousy are two halves of the same whole.

The second commandment is the seminal scripture on God's "righteous jealousy". It unequivocally states that God is "jealous" but does not explain what that means:

You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I **[YHWH] your God am a jealous (qanna') God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me**, but **showing [hesed]** to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments. (Exodus 20:4-6 ESV // Deuteronomy 5:8-10)

The other uses of the adjective, qanna', make abundantly clear what God's "righteous jealousy" is all about:

Observe what I command you this day. Behold, I will drive out before you the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. **Take care, lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land** to which you go, lest it become a snare in your midst. You shall tear down their altars and break their pillars and cut down their Asherim (for **you shall worship no other god**, for [YHWH], **whose name is Jealous (qanna'), is a jealous (qanna') God**), lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and when they **whore after their gods and sacrifice to their gods** and you are invited, you eat of his sacrifice, and **you take of their daughters for your sons**, and their daughters whore after their gods and make your sons whore after their gods. (Exodus 34:11-16 ESV)

Take care, **lest you forget the covenant of [YHWH] your God**, which he made with you, and **make a carved image, the form of anything** that [YHWH] your God has forbidden you. For [YHWH] your God is a consuming fire, **a jealous (qanna') God**.

It is [YHWH] your God you shall fear. Him you shall serve and by his name you shall swear. You shall not go after other gods, the gods of the peoples who are around you—for **[YHWH] your God in your midst is a jealous (qanna') God**—lest the anger of [YHWH] your God be kindled against you, and he destroy you from off the face of the earth. (Deuteronomy 4:23-24, 6:13-15 ESV)

Analysis of God's "righteous jealousy", qanna':

- **YHWH the True God is distinct from all false gods, "YHWH is a jealous God"**. The Israelites had just come out of Egypt. There were many "gods" in Egypt – each city had their own selection of "gods", but they were all very happy to co-exist with each other – the definition of "polytheism". YHWH will not under any circumstances tolerate another "god" – the definition of "righteous jealousy", **"YHWH your God you shall fear. Him you shall serve ... you shall worship no other god"**.
- **Worship of the True God requires living according to his teaching, "observe what I command you this day"**. This is incompatible with integrating with the inhabitants of Canaan (the way of the world), **"take care, lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land"** or **"you take of their daughters for your sons"**.
- **The True God is a living God**, he dwells with his people, **"YHWH your God is in your midst"**; therefore, the people must be holy.

¹⁴⁸ There are five occurrences, all in the Pentateuch, all discussed below.

¹⁴⁹ There are two occurrences, NOT in the Pentateuch; see Joshua 24:19 and Nahum 1:2.

- **The True God requires worship “in spirit and in truth”**,¹⁵⁰ it is not possible to represent the True God by an image, a drawing, or any other physical object, **“a carved image, the form of anything”** – this also includes “mental” or “conceptual” representations.

In his final speeches to the people in the Plains of Moab, Moses warned the people of consequences of apostasy and raising the jealousy of God:

Beware lest there be among you a man or woman or clan or tribe whose heart is turning away today from [YHWH] our God to go and **serve the gods of those nations**. ... [YHWH] will not be willing to forgive him, but rather the anger of [YHWH] and **his jealousy (qin‘ah) will smoke against that man**, and the curses written in this book will settle upon him, and [YHWH] will blot out his name from under heaven.

They stirred him to jealousy (qana‘) with strange gods; with abominations they provoked him to anger. [YHWH] saw it and spurned them, because of the provocation of his sons and his daughters.

They have made me jealous (qana‘) with what is no god; they have provoked me to anger with their idols.

So I will make them jealous (qana‘) with those who are no people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation.

(Deuteronomy 29:18a, 20, 32:16, 19, 21 ESV; see also Joshua 24:19-20, Psalm 78:58)

In his efforts to reach those exiles whom God was calling, the **Prophet Ezekiel** records God’s words expressing God’s “jealousy” with regard to the impending destruction of Jerusalem:

Thus shall my anger spend itself, and I will vent my fury upon them and satisfy myself. And they shall know that I am [YHWH]—that **I have spoken in my jealousy (qin‘ah)**—when I spend my fury upon them.

And **I will direct my jealousy (qin‘ah) against you**, that they may deal with you in fury.

So will I satisfy my wrath on you, and **my jealousy (qin‘ah) shall depart** from you. (Ezekiel 5:13, 23:25a, 16:42a ESV; see also 36:5-6, Psalm 79:5)

In his warning to Nineveh, the **Prophet Nahum** highlights the jealousy of God:

[YHWH] is a jealous (qanna‘) and avenging God; [YHWH] is avenging and wrathful;

[YHWH] takes vengeance on his adversaries and keeps wrath for his enemies.

[YHWH] is slow to anger and great in power, and [YHWH] will by no means clear the guilty. (Nahum 1:2-3a ESV see also Zephaniah 1:18, 3:8, Ezekiel 38:19)

The **Prophet Isaiah focuses on the “zeal” of God** to accomplish his purpose:

Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end,

on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore.

The zeal (qin‘ah) of [YHWH] of hosts will do this.

[YHWH], your hand is lifted up, but they do not see it.

Let them see your zeal for your people, and be ashamed.

Let the fire for your adversaries consume them.

For out of Jerusalem shall go **a remnant**, and out of Mount Zion a band of survivors.

The zeal (qin‘ah) of [YHWH] of hosts will do this.

[YHWH] goes out like a mighty man, like a man of war **he stirs up his zeal (qin‘ah)**; he cries out, he shouts aloud, he shows himself mighty against his foes.

He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation on his head; he put on garments of vengeance for clothing, and **wrapped himself in zeal (qin‘ah) as a cloak.**

Look down from heaven (shamayim) and see, from your holy and beautiful habitation.

Where are your zeal (qin‘ah) and your might?

The stirring of your inner parts and your compassion are held back from me.

(Isaiah 9:7, 26:11, 37:32 {// 2 Kings 19:31}, 42:13, 59:17, 63:15 ESV; see also Psalm 69:9, John 2:17)

The **Prophet Ezekiel** looks to the **New Israel** in the World Tomorrow:

Therefore thus says the Lord [YHWH]:

Now **I will restore the fortunes of Jacob and have mercy on the whole house of Israel**, and **I will be jealous (qana‘) for my holy name**. (Ezekiel 39:25 ESV; see also Zechariah 1:14, 8:2-3)

Reliable כּוּן - kun

The verbal root, *kun*, has a very broad range of meaning. Many of the nuances apply to strictly human activities. The fundamental meaning is “to prepare”, “to provide”, “to make ready”, “to establish”. Of course, God does all of these things, but most importantly God is established in his nature, in his

¹⁵⁰ See John 4:23

purpose, and in his way. **God is known by his mighty acts, especially the creation, which demonstrate God's reliability** – what God has set in place cannot be changed:

Forever, [YHWH], your word is firmly fixed in the heavens.

Your faithfulness ('emunah) endures to all generations;

you have established (kun) the earth, and it stands fast.

By your appointment they stand this day ... (Psalm 119:89-91a ESV; see also 148:3-6)

[YHWH] by wisdom founded the earth;

by understanding **he established (kun) the heavens**; (Proverbs 3:19 ESV)

Yours is the day, yours also the night;

you have established (kun) the heavenly lights and the sun.

You have fixed all the boundaries of the earth; you have made summer and winter. (Psalm 74:16-17 ESV)

It is he who made the earth by his power,

who established (kun) the world by his wisdom,

and by his understanding stretched out the heavens. (Jeremiah 10:12 // 51:15)

I know that you can do all things, and that **no purpose of yours can be thwarted**. (Job 42:2 ESV)

Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but **it is the purpose of [YHWH] that will stand**.

(Proverbs 19:21 ESV)

This is the purpose that is purposed concerning the whole earth,

and this is the hand that is stretched out over all the nations.

For **[YHWH] of hosts has purposed, and who will annul it?**

His hand is stretched out, and who will turn it back? (Isaiah 14:26-27)

I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning

and from ancient times things not yet done,

saying, **'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose'** ... (Isaiah 46:9b-10 ESV)

God has permanently established his rule over the creation, God's dominion is the whole creation and everyone on the earth:

[YHWH] reigns; he is robed in majesty;

[YHWH] is robed; he has put on strength ('oz) as his belt.

Yes, **the world is established (kun)**; it shall never be moved.

Your throne is established (kun) from of old; you are from everlasting. (Psalm 93:1-2 ESV)

[YHWH] has established (kun) his throne in the heavens, and **his kingdom rules over all**.

(Psalm 103:19 ESV)

Say among the nations, "[YHWH] reigns!

Yes, **the world is established (kun)**; it shall never be moved;

he will judge the peoples with equity." (Psalm 96:10 ESV)

Bless [YHWH], O you his **angels**, you **mighty ones who do his word**, obeying the voice of his word!

Bless [YHWH], all his hosts, his ministers, who do his will!

Bless [YHWH], **all his works, in all places of his dominion**.

Bless [YHWH], O my [being]! (Psalm 103 20-22 ESV)

All your works shall give thanks to you, [YHWH], and all **your saints shall bless you!**

They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom and tell of your power,

to make known to the children of man your mighty deeds,

and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.

Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,

and **your dominion endures throughout all generations**. (Psalm 145:10-13 ESV)

God's purpose in establishing his dominion is to bring the Way of God to all peoples:

But [YHWH] sits enthroned forever; **he has established (kun) his throne for justice (mish'pat)**,

and he judges the world with righteousness (tzedeq); he judges the peoples with uprightness (mesharim).

(Psalm 9:7-8 ESV; see also 99:4)

... then **a throne will be established (kun) in [hesed]**,

and on it will sit in faithfulness ('emeth) in the tent of David

one who judges and seeks justice (mish'pat) and is swift to do righteousness (tzedeq).

(Isaiah 16:5 ESV; see also 42:4)

The steps of a man are established (kun) by [YHWH] when he delights in his way; (Psalm 37:23 ESV)

From **where, then, does wisdom come?** And **where is the place of understanding?**

God understands the way to it, and he knows its place.

For he looks to the ends of the earth and sees everything under the heavens.

When he gave to the wind its weight and apportioned the waters by measure,

when he made a decree for the rain and a way for the lightning of the thunder,
then **he saw it and declared it; he established (kun) it**, and searched it out. (Job 28:20, 23-27 ESV)

Since **the foundation of the world**, the Plan of God has been determined.¹⁵¹ The implementation of the Plan was established with **the Promise of Messianic Descent made to David**.¹⁵² **God will establish his Kingdom on earth** to bring about the utopia humans have always dreamt about:

Do you not know? Do you not hear? Has it not been told you from the beginning?

Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? (Isaiah 40:21 ESV)

All these things Jesus said to the crowds in parables; indeed, he said nothing to them without a parable.

This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet:

I will open my mouth in parables; (Psalm 78:2a)

I will utter what has been hidden since the foundation of the world. (Matthew 13:34-35 ESV)

Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because **you loved me before the foundation of the world**. O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me.

(John 17:24-25 ESV)

... the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. **He was foreknown before the foundation of the world** but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you ...

(1 Peter 1:19-20 ESV)

Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own, for then **he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world**. But as it is, **he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself**.

(Hebrews 9:25-26 ESV)

When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and **I will establish (kun) his kingdom**. ... And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. **Your throne shall be established (kun) forever**.

Then King **David went in and sat before [YHWH] and said**, "Who am I, O Lord GOD, and what is my house ... And **you established (kun) for yourself your people Israel to be your people forever**. And you, [YHWH], became their God. And now, [YHWH] God, **confirm forever the word that you have spoken** concerning your servant and concerning his house, and do as you have spoken. ..."

(2 Samuel 7:12, 16, 18a, 24-25 ESV)

... [hesed] will be built up forever; in the heavens **you will establish (kun) your faithfulness (ʿemunah)**.

You have said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one; I have sworn to David my servant:

'I will establish (kun) your offspring forever, and build your throne for all generations.'"

I have found David, my servant; with my holy oil I have anointed him,
so that **my hand shall be established (kun) with him**; my arm also shall strengthen him.

His offspring shall endure forever, his throne as long as the sun before me.

Like the moon it shall be established (kun) forever, a faithful witness in the skies (shaḥaq)."

(Psalm 89:2-4, 20-21, 36-37 ESV)

As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of [YHWH] of hosts,
in **the city of our God, which God will establish (kun) forever**. (Psalm 48:8 ESV)

It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of [YHWH]

shall be established (kun) as the highest of the mountains,

and it shall be lifted up above the hills; and peoples shall flow to it,

and many nations shall come, and say:

"Come, let us go up to the mountain of [YHWH], to the house of the God of Jacob,
that **he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths**."

For out of Zion shall go forth [torah], and **the word of [YHWH] from Jerusalem**.

(Micah 4:1-2 ESV // Isaiah 2:2-3)

Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end,

on the throne of David and over his kingdom, **to establish (kun) it and to uphold it**

with justice (mishpat) and with righteousness (tzedaqah) from this time forth and forevermore.

The zeal (qin'ah) of [YHWH] of hosts will do this. (Isaiah 9:7 ESV)

Consistent נחם - naham

The verbal root, נחם - naham, has a fairly narrow range of meaning including "be sorry", "repent", "relent", "regret", "be comforted", "comfort". It is used of humans and of God. It can be used both

¹⁵¹ See section 1. *The Foundation of the World*, in the paper "The Human Condition" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

¹⁵² See section 7. *The Covenant of Descent*, in the paper "Covenants of Grace" located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

positively and negatively – under certain circumstances God is willing “to relent”, to change his mind; but about some things, God will NOT under any circumstance change his mind. The concept of providing “comfort” also works both ways – God does provide comfort but sometimes refuses to comfort. God’s ultimate desire, his plan and purpose, for human beings is to provide comfort:¹⁵³

Comfort (naham), comfort(naham) my people, says your God.

Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended,
that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from [YHWH’s] hand double for all her sins.

You will say in that day:

I will give thanks to you, [YHWH], for though you were angry with me,

your anger turned away, that you might comfort (naham) me.

Sing for joy, O heavens, and exult, O earth; break forth, O mountains, into singing!

For [YHWH] has comforted (naham) his people and will have compassion on his afflicted.

(Isaiah 40:1-2, 12:1, 49:13 ESV; see also 51:3, 12, 52:9, 66:13)

During his earthly ministry, when YHWH had assumed the role of Jesus Christ, one of his first acts as recorded by the Synoptist Luke, was to quote Isaiah as a demonstration of his messiahship:

And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and a report about him went out through all the surrounding country. And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all. And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read.

And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written,

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,

because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind,

to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.

(Isaiah 61:1-2a)

And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. And he began to say to them, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” (Luke 4:14-21 ESV)

Jesus quoted from the fifth Servant Song,¹⁵⁴ which, even by Jesus’ contemporaries, was widely recognized as a Messianic prophecy:

The Spirit of the Lord [YHWH] is upon me,

because [YHWH] has anointed me to bring good news to the poor;

he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives,

and the opening of the prison to those who are bound;

to proclaim the year of [YHWH’s] favor,

and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort (naham) all who mourn; (Isaiah 61:1-2 ESV)

At the time of the First Advent, Jesus read only as far as “to proclaim the year of YHWH’s favor”, because that was the objective of the First Advent. The next two clauses occur only at the Second Advent. The “day of vengeance” is the Day of YHWH,¹⁵⁵ after that, with the establishment of the Kingdom of God, God will “comfort all who mourn”. Many prophets and psalmists speak of that day:

For [YHWH] will vindicate his people and have compassion (naham) on his servants,

when he sees that their power is gone and there is none remaining, bond or free.

(Deuteronomy 32:36 ESV; see also Judges 2:18)

Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance, and the young men and the old shall be merry.

I will turn their mourning into joy; I will comfort (naham) them, and give them gladness for sorrow.

(Jeremiah 31:13 ESV)

Cry out again, Thus says [YHWH] of hosts: My cities shall again overflow with prosperity, and [YHWH] will again comfort (naham) Zion and again choose Jerusalem. (Zechariah 1:17 ESV)

Your name, [YHWH], endures forever, your renown, [YHWH], throughout all ages.

For [YHWH] will vindicate his people and have compassion (naham) on his servants.

(Psalm 135:13-14 ESV)

¹⁵³ See also the discussion by the Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 1:3-11.

¹⁵⁴ Some commentators acknowledge only four Servant Songs, excluding this one.

¹⁵⁵ See section **2.4.4.3 The Day of YHWH**, in the paper “**Second Pillar - The Plan of God**” and the paper “**The Day of YHWH**”; both papers are located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

You who have made me see many troubles and calamities will revive me again;
from the depths of the earth you will bring me up again.
You will increase my greatness and comfort (naham) me again. (Psalm 71:20-21 ESV)
Let your [hesed] comfort (naham) me according to your promise to your servant.
My eyes long for your promise; I ask, **“When will you comfort (naham) me?”**
(Psalm 119:76, 82 ESV; see also 86:17)

A **Psalm attributed to Moses**, requests patience and **pleads for compassion** recognizing that **under some circumstance God will not extend comfort**, but retains the right of retribution, as reflected by the **Prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel**:

So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom.
Return, [YHWH]! How long? **Have pity (naham) on your servants!** (Psalm 90 12-13 ESV)
Therefore the Lord declares, [YHWH] of hosts, the Mighty One of Israel:
Ah, **I will get relief (naham) from my enemies and avenge myself on my foes.** (Isaiah 1:24 ESV)
Thus shall my anger spend itself, and I will vent my fury upon them and satisfy myself (naham). And they shall know that I am [YHWH]—that I have spoken in my jealousy (qin‘ah)—when I spend my fury upon them.
I am [YHWH]. **I have spoken; it shall come to pass;** I will do it. **I will not go back;** I will not spare; **I will not relent (naham);** according to your ways and your deeds you will be judged, declares the Lord [YHWH]. (Ezekiel 5:13, 24:14 ESV; see also Zechariah 8:14)

The **Prophet Jeremiah** records **God’s explanation of when and how he will relent** from a decision or a judgement that has been pronounced. The objective of the Plan of God is for all human beings to have the **opportunity for salvation**. **All God’s decisions and judgements work to this end.** Repentance or refusal to repent are the key attitudes God looks for in human beings. Based on these attitudes God is more than willing to reverse a previous judgement or decision, “to relent”:

Then **the word of [YHWH] came to me:** “O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter has done? declares [YHWH]. Behold, like the clay in the potter’s hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel. **If at any time I declare concerning a nation or a kingdom,** that I will pluck up and break down and destroy it, and **if that nation,**¹⁵⁶ concerning which I have spoken, **turns from its evil, I will relent (naham) of the disaster** that I intended to do to it. And if at any time I declare concerning a nation or a kingdom that I will build and plant it, and **if it does evil in my sight,** not listening to my voice, **then I will relent (naham) of the good that I had intended to do to it.** ...” (Jeremiah 18:5-10 ESV)

In his mercy, God explicitly held out this offer to the last vestiges of the nation of Israel, but in the end, they refused to repent. **God could NOT relent of his judgement.** He had to destroy the nation:

Thus says [YHWH]: Stand in the court of [YHWH’s] house, and speak to all the cities of Judah that come to worship in the house of [YHWH] all the words that I command you to speak to them; do not hold back a word. **It may be they will listen, and every one turn from his evil way, that I may relent (naham) of the disaster that I intend to do to them** because of their evil deeds.

Then **Jeremiah spoke** to all the officials and all the people, saying, “...Now therefore mend your ways and your deeds, and **obey the voice of [YHWH] your God,** and **[YHWH] will relent (naham) of the disaster that he has pronounced** against you. ...”

[YHWH], do not your eyes look for truth? You have struck them down, but they felt no anguish; you have consumed them, but **they refused to take correction.** They have made their faces harder than rock; **they have refused to repent.**

You have rejected me, declares [YHWH]; you keep going backward, so I have stretched out my hand against you and destroyed you—**I am weary of relenting (naham).** (Jeremiah 26:2-3, 12a, 13, 5:3, 15:6 ESV; see also 4:28, 42:10)

The ability of God to relent, to assess a situation and determine that a decision or judgement should be reversed, is first documented at the time of Noah:

[YHWH] saw that **the wickedness of man was great in the earth,** and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And **[YHWH] regretted (naham) that he had made man on the earth,** and it grieved him to his heart. So [YHWH] said, “I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for **I am sorry (naham) that I have made them.**” But Noah found favor in the eyes of [YHWH]. (Genesis 6:5-8 ESV)

¹⁵⁶ See the contrasting treatments of Nineveh in the Book of Jonah and the Book of Nahum.
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Similarly, after the golden calf incident, **Moses appealed to God's ability to relent:**

But **Moses implored [YHWH] his God and said**, “[YHWH], why does your wrath burn hot against your people, whom you have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? Why should the Egyptians say, ‘With evil intent did he bring them out, to kill them in the mountains and to consume them from the face of the earth’? **Turn from your burning anger and relent (naham)** from this disaster against your people. ...” **And [YHWH] relented (naham)** from the disaster that he had spoken of bringing on his people. (Exodus 32:11-12, 14 ESV)

God's ability to relent is similarly exemplified in dealing with **King Saul**¹⁵⁷ and **King David**.¹⁵⁸ The **Prophet Amos** twice is given **prophetic visions**, to which he prays for reprieve, and **YHWH relents**:

This is what the Lord [YHWH] showed me: behold, he was **forming locusts** when the latter growth was just beginning to sprout, and behold, it was the latter growth after the king's mowings. When they had finished eating the grass of the land, I said,

O Lord [YHWH], **please forgive!** How can Jacob stand? He is so small!”

[YHWH] relented (naham) concerning this: “It shall not be,” said [YHWH].

This is what the Lord [YHWH] showed me: behold, the Lord [YHWH] was calling for a **judgment by fire**, and it devoured the great deep and was eating up the land. Then I said,

O Lord [YHWH], **please cease!** How can Jacob stand? He is so small!”

[YHWH] relented (naham) concerning this: “This also shall not be,” said the Lord [YHWH]. (Amos 7:1-6 ESV; see also Joel 2:12-14, Jonah 3:9-10, 4:2)

The **Prophet Samuel** is explicit that **God's prescience in making these decisions is a divine attribute**, beyond human ken, an aphorism echoed by Bil'e'am, and others:

And also **the Glory of Israel will not lie or have regret (naham), for he is not a man, that he should have regret (naham)**. (1 Samuel 15:29 ESV)

God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, **that he should change his mind (naham)**. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it? (Numbers 23:19 ESV)

[YHWH] has sworn and will not change his mind (naham) ... (Psalm 110:4a)

I will not violate my covenant or alter the word that went forth from my lips. (Psalm 89:34 ESV)

But **he is unchangeable**, and who can turn him back? **What he desires, that he does**. (Job 23:13 ESV)

For I [YHWH] do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed. (Malachi 3:6 ESV)

But **they do not know the thoughts of [YHWH]**; they do not understand his plan ... (Micah 4:12a ESV)

So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise **the unchangeable character of his purpose**, he guaranteed it with an oath, so that by **two unchangeable things**, in which **it is impossible for God to lie** ... (Hebrews 6:17-18a ESV)

The character attribute of “consistency”, *naham*, clearly does NOT imply that God is rigid. God is clearly able to change according to circumstances. **It is in the way that God evaluates circumstances that he is consistent**. God is committed to accomplishing his Plan, to perform his purpose for human beings – he will never vary in that. The key to individual human circumstances is repentance. Humans who repent can always find comfort from God.

Mighty יִצְחָק - 'azaz

The verbal root יִצְחָק - 'azaz, “be strong”, is used only three times with God as subject.¹⁵⁹ The derived masculine noun, יִצְחָק 'oz, “strength”, is used more frequently. There are also derived from 'azaz a rare adjective, יִצְחָק 'izzuz, and rare masculine noun, יִצְחָק 'ezuz, which mean “strength”, “might”.

The might of God in the battle with Pharaoh¹⁶⁰ **and the exodus event**¹⁶¹ is extolled in Exodus chapter fifteen, the **Song of the Sea**:

I will sing to [YHWH], for he has triumphed gloriously;
the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea.

[YHWH] is my strength ('oz) and my song, and he has become my salvation;
this is my God, and I will praise him, my father's God, and I will exalt him.
[YHWH] is a man of war; [YHWH] is his name.

¹⁵⁷ See 1 Samuel 15:11, 35

¹⁵⁸ See 2 Samuel 24:15-17 // 1 Chronicles 21:14-17

¹⁵⁹ See Psalms 68:28, 89:13, and Proverbs 8:28.

¹⁶⁰ See Exodus chapters seven through eleven and 12:29-32

¹⁶¹ See Exodus 12:33-39, 13:17-22, 14:1-31

Who is like you, [YHWH], among the gods?

Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders?

You stretched out your right hand; the earth swallowed them.

You have led in your [hesed] the people whom you have redeemed;

you have guided them by your strength (`oz) to your holy abode. (Exodus 15:1b-3, 11-13 ESV)

God is inherently powerful, strong, and mighty. David even uses **“Strength” as an epithet for God:**

Who is this King of glory?

[YHWH], strong (`izzuz) and mighty (gibbor),¹⁶² [YHWH], mighty (gibbor) in battle!

Once God has spoken; twice have I heard this: that **power (`oz) belongs to God** ...

You have a mighty arm; **strong (`azaz) is your hand,** high your right hand.

[YHWH] reigns; he is robed in majesty; [YHWH] is robed; **he has put on strength (`oz) as his belt.**

Hear my cry, O God, listen to my prayer;

from the end of the earth I call to you when my heart is faint.

Lead me to **the rock** that is higher than I,

for you have been **my refuge, a strong (`oz) tower against the enemy.**

[YHWH], **in your strength (`oz) the king rejoices,** and in your salvation how greatly he exults!

O my Strength (`oz), I will watch for you, for you, O God, are **my fortress.**

But I **will sing of your strength (`oz);** I will sing aloud of your [hesed] in the morning.

For you have been to me **a fortress** and a refuge in the day of my distress.

O my Strength (`oz), I will sing praises to you, for you, O God, are **my fortress,**

the God who shows me [hesed].

(Psalm 24:8, 62:11, 89:13, 93:1a, 61:1-3, 21:1, 59:9, 16-17 ESV)

God is known by his mighty acts. This is nowhere more exemplified than **his using his mighty power on behalf of his people,** the True Worshipers of God:

[YHWH] is my strength (`oz) and my shield; in him my heart trusts, and I am helped; my heart exults, and with my song I give thanks to him.

[YHWH] is the strength (`oz) of his people; he is the saving refuge of his anointed.

May [YHWH] give strength (`oz) to his people! May [YHWH] bless his people with peace!

God is our refuge and strength (`oz), a very present help in trouble.

Seek [YHWH] and his strength (`oz); seek his presence continually!

You are the God who works wonders; **you have made known your might (`oz) among the peoples.**

You with your arm redeemed your people ...

... **you have established strength (`oz)** because of your foes, **to still the enemy** and the avenger.

Who considers **the power (`oz) of your anger,** and your wrath according to the fear of you?

Say to God, **“How awesome are your deeds!**

So great is your power (`oz) that your enemies come cringing to you. ...”

Summon your power (`oz), O God, the power (`azaz), O God, by which you have worked for us.

O kingdoms of the earth, sing to God; sing praises to the Lord,

to him who rides in the heavens, the ancient heavens;

behold, **he sends out his voice, his mighty (`oz) voice.**

Ascribe power (`oz) to God, whose majesty is over Israel,

and **whose power (`oz) is in the skies (shahaq).**

Awesome is God from his sanctuary; the God of Israel—

he is the one who gives power (`oz) and strength to his people. Blessed be God!

(Psalm 28:7-8, 29:11, 46:1, 105:4, 77:14-15a, 8:2b, 90:11, 66:3, 68:28, 32-35¹⁶³ ESV)

Ultimately, **the power of God will bring about the accomplishment of his Plan** – all people will participate in the beneficence God:

Behold, **God is my salvation;** I will trust, and will not be afraid;

for **[YH YHWH] is my strength (`oz)** and my song, and he has become my salvation.

[YHWH] has sworn by his right hand and **by his mighty (`oz) arm:**

I will not again give your grain to be food for your enemies,

and foreigners shall not drink your wine for which you have labored;

but **those who garner it shall eat it and praise [YHWH],**

and those who gather it shall drink it **in the courts of my sanctuary.** (Isaiah 12:2, 62:8-9 ESV)

¹⁶² גִּבּוֹר - gibbor, a masculine adjective, a synonym of `oz

¹⁶³ These verses in Psalm 68 could be titled “An Ode to the Power of God”.

[YHWH], my strength ('oz) and my stronghold, my refuge in the day of trouble,
to you shall the nations come from the ends of the earth and say:

Our fathers have inherited nothing but lies, worthless things in which there is no profit.

Can man make for himself gods? Such are not gods!

Therefore, behold, I will make them know,

this once I will make them know my power (yad) and my might (g^eburah),¹⁶⁴
and they shall know that my name is [YHWH]. (Jeremiah 16:19-21 ESV)

And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength ('oz) of [YHWH],
in the majesty of the name of [YHWH] his God.

And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth.

And he shall be their peace. (Micah 5:4-5a ESV)

1.5 The Holy Spirit

The words *ruah* and *pneuma* were introduced in section **1.1.1 God is Spirit**. Both words carry a range of meaning including “wind”, “breath”, “spirit”, “Holy Spirit”.¹⁶⁵ **The Book of Acts is the record of God’s using the Holy Spirit to work through the Apostles to create the New Testament Church.** While the Holy Spirit was clearly in evidence throughout the period of the Old Testament, the presence of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament Church was different from anything in the previous age. The Holy Spirit worked with the Nation of Israel and with many individuals in Israel, but it was only made available as an indwelling presence on a very limited basis as required to accomplish the Plan of God. **The general availability of the Holy Spirit to a large number of called-out individuals was only made possible by the propitiating sacrifice of Jesus Christ.** The Book of Acts documents the beginning of this process.

At the baptism of Jesus, **John the Baptist prophesized the beginning of the New Testament Church:**

I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.¹⁶⁶
(Matthew 3:11 ESV // Luke 3:16)

The Synoptist Luke commences the Book of Acts with the fulfillment of this prophecy:

And while staying with them [Jesus] ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, “you heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now. ... you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. And **they were all filled with the Holy Spirit** ...

But **Peter**, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them: ... this is what was uttered through the **prophet Joel**:

And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh ...
(Joel 2:28a)

And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.” ... So those who received his word were baptized, and **there were added that day about three thousand [persons]**.
(Acts 1:4-5, 8, 2:1-4a, 14a, 16-17a, 38-39, 41 ESV)

Luke records the power of the Holy Spirit to establish the Church in Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria:

Then Peter, **filled with the Holy Spirit**, said to them, “**Rulers of the people and elders**, if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done ...”

And when they had prayed, **the place in which they were gathered together was shaken**, and **they were all filled with the Holy Spirit** and **continued to speak the word of God with boldness**.

¹⁶⁴ Jeremiah uses two synonyms of 'oz: יָד - yad and גְּבוּרָה - g^eburah

¹⁶⁵ Note that **the “grammatical gender” of both words is irrelevant to their translation**. The word *ruah* is a “feminine noun”; *pneuma* is a “neuter noun”. The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament is never considered “female”. **In the New Testament, the Holy Spirit is almost universally considered “masculine”**, but this is an interpretation of the translators due to their belief in a “trinity”. The Holy Spirit should always be referenced as neuter – it is NOT a personage; it is neither male nor female.

¹⁶⁶ The allusion to “**fire**” is a double entente: Matthew 3:10 and 12 imply that the “**baptism**” of those rejecting Jesus would be in “**unquenchable fire**”; however, the Book of Acts is clear that those baptised with the Holy Spirit must “**through many tribulations ... enter the kingdom of God**” (Acts 14:22).

But **the high priest** rose up, and all who were with him (that is, the party of **the Sadducees**), and filled with jealousy they **arrested the apostles and put them in the public prison**. ... Look! The men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people. ... **Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men**. The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you killed by hanging him on a tree. God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And **we are witnesses to these things**, and **so is the Holy Spirit**, [which] God has given to those who obey him."

And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and **they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria**, except the apostles. ... Now those who were scattered went about **preaching the word**. Philip went down to the city of **Samaria** and proclaimed to them the Christ. ... Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that **Samaria** had received the word of God, they sent to them **Peter and John**, who came down and **prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit** ... (Act 4:8-9a, 31, 5:17-18, 25b, 29-32, 8:1b, 4-5, 14-15 ESV)

Soon, the **Pharisee Saul** was converted to become the **Apostle Paul**, and **through the Holy Spirit the gospel was taken to the entire Roman Empire**:

So **Ananias** departed and entered the house. And **laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul**, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and **be filled with the Holy Spirit**." ... So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up. And walking in the fear of the Lord and **in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied**.

But there were some of them, **men of Cyprus and Cyrene**, who on **coming to Antioch** spoke to the Hellenists also, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and **a great number who believed turned to the Lord**. The report of this came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent **Barnabas** to Antioch. ... for he was a good man, **full of the Holy Spirit and of faith**. And a great many people were added to the Lord. So **Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul** ...

Now there were in the church at **Antioch** prophets and teachers, **Barnabas ... and Saul**. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, **the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."**

And **when we came into Rome, Paul was allowed to stay by himself**, with the soldier who guarded him. After three days **he called together the local leaders of the Jews**, and when they had gathered, he said to them, "Brothers, though I had done nothing against our people or the customs of our fathers, yet I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans. ..."

When **they had appointed a day for him**, they came to him at his lodging in greater numbers. From morning till evening he expounded to them, testifying to the kingdom of God ... And disagreeing among themselves, they departed after **Paul had made one statement: "The Holy Spirit was right in saying to your fathers through Isaiah the prophet:**

Go to this people, and say,
You will indeed hear but never understand, and you will indeed see but never perceive.
(Isaiah 6:9)

Therefore let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will listen." (Acts 9:17, 31, 11:20-22, 24-25, 13:1-2, 28:16-17, 23a, 25-26, 28 ESV)

It was the power of the Holy Spirit working through the Apostles and disciples that built the New Testament Church. This was the reason for which the Apostles and disciples had been called. Jesus worked with them and taught them, but **without the Holy Spirit nothing would have been accomplished**.

1.5.1 The Power of God

After the surface of the earth had been destroyed by the rebellion of Satan,¹⁶⁷ and it was time for the re-creation, **God acted through the Holy Spirit**:

The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And **the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters**. (Genesis 1:2 ESV)

The **mountains rose**, the **valleys sank** down to the place that you appointed for them.
You set a boundary that they may not pass, so that they might not again cover the earth.
You cause the **grass to grow** for the livestock and **plants for man to cultivate**,
that he may bring forth food from the earth ...

[YHWH], how manifold are your works!

In wisdom have you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.

¹⁶⁷ For a discussion of this, see section 1. *The Foundation of the World* in the paper "The Human Condition", located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

When you send forth your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the ground.
(Psalm 104:8-9, 14, 24, 30 ESV)

The **Prophets Micah, Isaiah, and Zechariah** are explicit that it is the Spirit of God by which he accomplished his mighty works:

... as for me, **I am filled with power, with the Spirit of [YHWH]**, and with [justness] (mish^epat) and might ... (Micah 3:8a ESV)

In that day [YHWH] of hosts will be a crown of glory, and a diadem of beauty, to the remnant of his people, and **a spirit of [justness] (mish^epat)** to him who sits in judgment, **and strength** to those who turn back the battle at the gate. (Isaiah 28:5-6 ESV)

Then he said to me, "This is the word of [YHWH] to Zerubbabel: **Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit**, says [YHWH] of hosts. ..." (Zechariah 4:6 ESV)

In one of the most famous Messianic prophecies, **the Prophet Isaiah describe the source of the power of the Messiah:**

There shall come forth **a shoot from the stump of Jesse**, and **a branch**¹⁶⁸ from his roots shall bear fruit. And **the Spirit of [YHWH] shall rest upon him,**
the Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and might,
the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of [YHWH]. (Isaiah 11:1-2 ESV)

The Incarnation itself was accomplished through the power of the Holy Spirit:

In the sixth month the **angel Gabriel was sent from God** to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, **to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph**, of the house of David. And **the virgin's name was Mary.**

And he came to her and said, "**Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!**" But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, **Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus.** He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and **of his kingdom there will be no end.**

And **Mary said to the angel, "How will this be,** since I am a virgin?"

And the angel answered her, "**The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you;** therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. ..." (Luke 1:26-35 ESV; see also Matthew 1:18-20)

After Jesus was a baptized and was ready to commence his ministry, his first task was to qualify as "**King of Kings**" to rule in "**his kingdom of which there will be no end**". **He accomplished this by the power of the Holy Spirit** and then proceeded to "**preach the Gospel**" **in the power of the Holy Spirit:**

And **Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit,** returned from the Jordan and was **led by the Spirit in the wilderness** for forty days, being **tempted by the devil.**

Then **Jesus said** to him,

Be gone, Satan! For it is written,

"You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve." (Deuteronomy 6:3)

Then **the devil left him,** and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.

And **Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee,** and a report about him went out through all the surrounding country. And **he taught in their synagogues,** being glorified by all. ... **proclaiming the gospel of God,** and saying, "**The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand;** repent and believe in the gospel." (Luke 4:1-2a, Matthew 4:10-11, Luke 4:14-15, Mark 1:14b-15 ESV)

The **Apostle Paul** is explicit that it is **only through the power of the Holy Spirit that Christians can realize the hope of the Christian calling** – to be granted the gift of eternal life:

May **the God of hope** fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that **by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.** ... **If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you,** he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also **give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit [which] dwells in you.** ... He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, **who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.**

For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, because **our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit** and with full conviction. ... we who were the first to **hope in Christ** might be to the praise of his glory. In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, **were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,**¹⁶⁹ [which] is **the**

¹⁶⁸ For a discussion of this symbolism, see *Excursus 3 – The Branch* in the paper "**The Transfiguration and the Tabernacle**", located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

¹⁶⁹ See also Ephesians 4:30

guarantee of our inheritance ...

(Romans 15:13, 8:11, 2 Corinthians 5:5,¹⁷⁰ 1 Thessalonians 1:4-5a, Ephesians 1:12-14a ESV)

The Apostle Paul also elaborates the power of the Holy Spirit to live a Christian life:

For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, for God gave us a Spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control. ... And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, [which] apports to each one individually as [God] wills.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. ... Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. ... and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God ...

(2 Timothy 1:6-7, 1 Corinthians 2:3-5, 12:4-11, Galatians 5:22-23, Ephesians 6:10-11, 17b ESV)

From the beginning of the working-out of his Plan, the Holy Spirit has been the operative force of God. The Prophets are explicit that they were empowered by the Holy Spirit. Jesus' incarnation was effected by the Holy Spirit. The incarnate Jesus Christ, as a human being, relied on the Holy Spirit to empower himself. Only through the Holy Spirit can those called by God live a Christian life and thus be considered candidates for the gift of eternal life.

1.5.2 NOT a Sentient Being

The pagan doctrine of the "trinity" is thoroughly discounted by any serious historical investigation of the topic.¹⁷¹ There is no reason to discuss it further. The Holy Spirit is the "power of God" as demonstrated in the pervious section. This section focuses on examples in the Bible which demonstrate the nature of the Holy Spirit – how it is used by God to accomplish his purposes.

To facilitate the construction of the Tabernacle, God, through the power of the Holy Spirit, gave certain individuals ability to perform various crafts. These were physical skills with no religious implications:

Then Moses said to the people of Israel, "See, [YHWH] has called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah; and he has filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, with intelligence, with knowledge, and with all craftsmanship, to devise artistic designs, to work in gold and silver and bronze, in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, for work in every skilled craft. And he has inspired him to teach, both him and Oholiab the son of Ahisamach of the tribe of Dan. He has filled them with skill to do every sort of work done by an engraver or by a designer or by an embroiderer in blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen, or by a weaver—by any sort of workman or skilled designer. (Exodus 35:30-35 ESV)

In the wilderness, God provided seventy men with limited power of the Holy Spirit to assist Moses.

God described it as "taking some of the Spirit" that was on Moses and giving it to the assistants. If the "Spirit" was a "sentient being", this would imply partitioning, "carving up", the being:

Then [YHWH] said to Moses, "Gather for me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them, and bring them to the tent of meeting, and let them take their stand there with you. And I will come down and talk with you there. And I will take some of the Spirit that is on you and put it on them, and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, so that you may not bear it yourself alone. ..."

So Moses went out and told the people the words of [YHWH]. And he gathered seventy men of the elders of the people and placed them around the tent. Then [YHWH] came down in the cloud and spoke to him, and took some of the Spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders. And as soon as the

¹⁷⁰ See also 2 Corinthians 1:22

¹⁷¹ See for example, "Is God a Trinity", located at www.ucg.org;

the Wikipedia article "Triad (religion)", located at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Triad_\(religion\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Triad_(religion));

or, the Encyclopedia Britannica article "triad", located at <https://www.britannica.com/topic/High-God>.

Spirit rested on them, they prophesied. But they did not continue doing it.
(Numbers 11:16-17, 24-25 ESV)

Similarly, **when the mantle was passing from Elijah to Elisha**, Elisha asks for a “double portion” of the Holy Spirit. If the Holy Spirit were a sentient being this would imply “duplicating” the being:

When they had crossed, **Elijah said to Elisha**, “Ask what I shall do for you, before I am taken from you.”

And **Elisha said**, “**Please let there be a double portion of your spirit¹⁷² on me.**” ... Now when the sons of the prophets who were at Jericho saw him opposite them, they said, “**The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha.**” (2 Kings 2:9-10, 15 ESV)

King David explains that **the Holy Spirit permeates the whole creation** and through its power God is in constant contact with David:

Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence?

If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in [the grave],¹⁷³ you are there!

If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there **your hand shall lead me**, and **your right hand shall hold me.**

If I say, “Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light about me be night,”

even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is bright as the day, for darkness is as light with you.
(Psalm 139:7-12 ESV)

The **Prophet Isaiah** explains that it is **NOT possible to “measure” the Holy Spirit** and that when God speaks, it is **through the power of the Holy Spirit that his word is carried out:**

Who has measured the Spirit of [YHWH] ...

For **the mouth of [YHWH] has commanded**, and **his Spirit has gathered** them. (Isaiah 40:13a, 34:16b ESV)

Several **metaphors** are used to describe the Holy Spirit – **it is most commonly compared to water:**

And it shall come to pass afterward, that **I will pour out my Spirit** on all flesh;

your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,

your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions.

Even on the male and female servants in those days **I will pour out my Spirit.** (Joel 2:28-29 ESV)

... **until the Spirit is poured upon us from on high,**

and the wilderness becomes a fruitful field, and the fruitful field is deemed a forest.

For I will **pour water on the thirsty land**, and streams on the dry ground;

I will pour my Spirit upon your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants. (Isaiah 32:15, 44:3 ESV)

While Peter was still saying these things, **the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word.** And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because **the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles.** (Acts 10:44-45 ESV)

... and hope does not put us to shame, because **God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit** [which] has been given to us. (Romans 5:5 ESV)

For **in one Spirit we were all baptized** into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and **all were made to drink of one Spirit.** (1 Corinthians 12:13 ESV)

But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, **by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit,** [which] he **poured out on** us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior ...
(Titus 3:4-6 ESV)

At one point, the **Apostle Paul** reverses the metaphor, **comparing the Holy Spirit to fire** which might be quenched by water:

Do not quench the Spirit. (1 Thessalonians 5:19 ESV)

Another very famous metaphor for the Holy Spirit is the “dove”:

In those days **Jesus** came from Nazareth of Galilee and was **baptized by John** in the Jordan. And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw **the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove.** And a voice came from heaven, “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.” (Mark 1:9-11 ESV // Matthew 3:13-17, Luke 3:21-22)

The next day [John the Baptist] saw **Jesus** coming toward him, and said, “Behold, **the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!** This is he of whom I said, ‘After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.’ **I myself did not know him,** but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel.”

¹⁷² Clearly this implies the Holy Spirit, see 1 Kings 18:12, 2 Kings 2:16.

¹⁷³ The word שְׁאוֹל - shē’ol, means “**the grave**”. It is frequently used metaphorically in ways that could be taken to support “**Dante’s descriptions of hell**”, which **are a pure fiction**. Using shē’ol as a proper noun is confusing because it may be taken as support for Dante’s fiction.
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And John bore witness: “I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’ And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.” (John 1:29-34 ESV)

There is nothing in the Bible that can be used to support the notion that the Holy Spirit is a sentient being. The “trinity” is an utterly pagan lie foisted onto humanity by Satan the Devil. The Bible is clear and specific about the nature of the Holy Spirit – it is the power of God through which God has and will continue to accomplish his purpose.

1.5.3 Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

The definition of a True Worshipper of God, a “Christian” in modern terms, is to have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit:

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ... By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh ... For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.

You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit [which] dwells in you. (Romans 8:1, 3b, 5-6, 9-11 ESV)

On the night of the First Christian Passover, after the foot-washing ceremony, Jesus explained to the Apostles the nature of the Holy Spirit:

Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. ... If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper,¹⁷⁴ to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, [which] the world cannot receive, because it neither sees [it] nor knows [it]. You know [it], for [it] dwells with you and will be in you.

I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.

These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, [which] the Father will send in my name, [it] will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. (John 14:1, 15-21, 25-27 ESV)

Analysis of Jesus’ teaching on the Holy Spirit:

- Jesus stresses the unity of himself and the Father, “Believe in God; believe also in me”, “I am in my Father”
- Jesus personifies the Holy Spirit as a “helper”, and “advocate”, “the Father will give you another Helper, the Holy Spirit”
- Jesus had warned the Apostles of his imminent death (see Mark 8:31, 9:31, 10:33-34), now it would happen, “the world will see me no more”
- But, through the Holy Spirit, Jesus would be with the Apostles, “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you”
- Jesus reiterates the hope of the Christian life, the gift of eternal life, “because I live, you also will live”
- Jesus is clear that a requirement of a True Worshipper is to live by the Way of God, “whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me”
- Because Jesus would die a propitiating death, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit would become possible, “the Spirit of truth dwells with you and will be in you”
- This will make the Apostle into “Christians” living in unity with Jesus and the Father, “I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you”

¹⁷⁴ The Greek word παράκλητος - paraklētos, a masculine noun, occurs only in John 14:16,26, 15:26, 16:7, and 1 John 2:1. It carries the range of meaning including “advocate”, “intercessor”, “mediator”, “helper”; see GEL pages 623-624. Jesus uses the word in descriptive sense, not necessarily implying a “personification”.

- The indwelling of the Holy Spirit will make it possible to remember the teaching of Jesus, to understand it, and live by the Way of God, **“the Holy Spirit will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you”, “let not your hearts be troubled”**

The **Apostle Paul** explains that **understanding the teaching of God comes only through the Holy Spirit:**

But **we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God**, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. ... But, as it is written,

What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined,
what God has prepared for those who love him — (Isaiah 64:4)

these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except **the spirit of [man]**,¹⁷⁵ which is in him? So also **no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.** Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit [which] is from God, **that we might understand the things freely given us by God.** And we impart this in words **not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit**, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. (1 Corinthians 2:7, 9-13 ESV; see also Ephesians 1:15-19)

Paul goes on to explain that **conversion requires the inner transformation of a person effected by the Holy Spirit:**

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom [the whole]¹⁷⁶ family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory **he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being**, so that **Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith**—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may **have strength to comprehend** with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that **you may be filled with all the fullness of God.** (Ephesians 3:14-19 ESV; see also 4:20-23)

To live a Christian life requires ongoing contact with God through the Holy Spirit:

Likewise **the Spirit helps us in our weakness.** For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, **but the Spirit [itself] intercedes for us** with groanings too deep for words. And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind¹⁷⁷ of the Spirit, because **the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.** (Romans 8:26-27 ESV)

The unity of Christians with each other and with Jesus Christ and with God the Father occurs through **the indwelling of the Holy Spirit**, the power of God:

On the last day of the feast, the great day, **Jesus stood up and cried out**,

If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. (Isaiah 55:1)

Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said,

‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’ (Isaiah 12:3, Jeremiah 17:13)

Now this he said about the Spirit, [which] those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. (John 7:37-39 ESV; see also John 4:10-15)

I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to **walk in a manner worthy of the calling** to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to **maintain the unity of the Spirit** in the bond of peace. **There is one body and one Spirit**—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—one Lord, one faith, one baptism, **one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.** (Ephesians 4:1-6 ESV; see also 1 Corinthians 6:17)

The frequent metaphor of a Christian becoming **the Temple of God** is used to clarify what it means to **“dwell” with God, to “abide” in God:**

Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God, and God in him. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit [which] he has given us. (1 John 3:24 ESV)

In him you also are being built together into **a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.** (Ephesians 2:22 ESV)

Do you not know that **you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?** ... Or do you not know that **your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit** within you, [which] you have from God? You are not your own, or you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body. (1 Corinthians 3:16, 6:19-20 ESV)

Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. **By the Holy Spirit [which] dwells within us, guard the good deposit** entrusted to you. (2 Timothy 1:13-14 ESV)

¹⁷⁵ The Greek phrase is: τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, to pneuma tou anthropou, literally “the spirit the of man”; see Old King James; see also the discussion in section **2.1.2 The Nature of Man**, in the paper “**Second Pillar - The Plan of God**” located at www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca.

¹⁷⁶ The Greek phrase is: ἐξ οὗ πάσα πατριά, ex hou pasa patria, literally “of whom wholeness (all) family”; see NIV, NKJV.

¹⁷⁷ This is a “personification” — what Paul means is that the Holy Spirit reflects or reveals the mind of God.

There are many examples of **True Worshipers being imbued with indwelling of the Holy Spirit**:

Moses spoke to [YHWH], saying, "Let [YHWH], the God of the spirits of all flesh, **appoint a man over the congregation** who shall go out before them and come in before them, **who shall lead them** out and bring them in, that the congregation of [YHWH] may not be as sheep that have no shepherd." So [YHWH] said to Moses, "**Take Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit**, and lay your hand on him." (Numbers 27:15-18 ESV; see also Deuteronomy 34:9)

Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers. And **the Spirit of [YHWH] rushed upon David from that day forward**. (1 Samuel 16:13a ESV)

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

Cast me not away from your presence, and **take not your Holy Spirit from me**. (Psalm 51:10-11 ESV)

Then **the Spirit of God clothed Zechariah** the son of Jehoiada the priest, and he stood above the people, and said to them, "**Thus says God**, 'Why do you break the commandments of [YHWH], so that you cannot prosper? Because you have forsaken [YHWH], he has forsaken you.'"

(2 Chronicles 24:20 ESV; see also 15:1, 20:14)

And his father **Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit** and prophesied, saying ...

Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was **Simeon**, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and **the Holy Spirit was upon him**. (Luke 1:67, 2:25 ESV)

The **Book of Acts** is full of examples of the Holy Spirit coming to dwell in the converted:

When the **day of Pentecost** arrived, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven **a sound like a mighty rushing wind**, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. And **they were all filled with the Holy Spirit** ...

Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that **Samaria had received the word of God**, they sent to them **Peter** and **John**, who came down and prayed for them that they might **receive the Holy Spirit**, for [it] had not yet fallen on any of them, but **they had only been baptized** in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then **they laid their hands on them** and **they received the Holy Spirit**.

And when **the Gentiles** heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and **as many as were appointed to eternal life believed**. ... And the disciples **were filled** with joy and **with the Holy Spirit**.

... **Paul** passed through the inland country and **came to Ephesus**. There **he found some disciples**. And he said to them, "**Did you receive the Holy Spirit** when you believed?" And they said, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." And he said, "**Into what then were you baptized?**" They said, "Into John's baptism." And Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus." On hearing this, **they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus**. And when Paul had laid his hands on them, **the Holy Spirit came on them** ...

(Acts 2:1-4a, 8:14-17, 13:48, 52, 19:1b-6a ESV)

see also 4:31, 6:5, 7:55, 9:17, 10:44-45, 11:15-16, 24, 13:9, 15:8)

The fundamental difference between the world today and the World Tomorrow will be **the availability of indwelling if the Holy Spirit to all human beings**:

And it shall come to pass afterward, that **I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh**; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions.

Even on the male and female servants in those days **I will pour out my Spirit**.

And it shall come to pass that **everyone who calls on the name of [YHWH] shall be saved**.

(Joel 2:28-29, 32a)

And as for me, this is **my covenant** with them," says [YHWH]: "**My Spirit that is upon you**, and my words that I have put in your mouth, **shall not depart** out of your mouth, or out of the mouth of your offspring, or out of the mouth of your children's offspring," says [YHWH], "**from this time forth and forevermore**." (Isaiah 59:21 ESV)

And I will give you a new heart, and **a new spirit I will put within you**. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And **I will put my Spirit within you**, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to [live by my mish'patim].

And **I will put my Spirit within you**, and **you shall live**, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I am [YHWH]; **I have spoken, and I will do it, declares [YHWH]**.

Therefore thus says the Lord [YHWH]: Now I will restore the fortunes of Jacob and have mercy on the whole house of Israel, and **I will be jealous for my holy name**. ... And I will not hide my face anymore from them, **when I pour out my Spirit upon the house of Israel**, declares the Lord [YHWH].

(Ezekiel 36:26-27, 37:14, 39:25, 29 ESV; see also 11:19)

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God. ... “I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.” The Spirit and the Bride say, “Come.” And let the one who hears say, “Come.” And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price.
(Revelation 2:7, 22:16-17 ESV)

The indwelling of the Holy Spirit makes a person a “whole” being. God has placed in human beings an innate need for contact with the Creator. This need is only satisfied by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. **God the Father and Jesus Christ have unlimited power through the Holy Spirit. It is also what binds them together in “unity”.** **This “unity” is also extended to human beings through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.**

Epilogue

This completes “**The Nature of God**”, the first part of the three-part series on “**The Three Pillars of Revelation**”. Part Two, “**The Plan of God**”, discusses God’s purpose for human beings and how God is accomplishing that purpose. Specifically, it discusses “The God Family”, the nature of “Salvation”, the history of God’s working with human beings – “Salvation History”, and “The Role of Prophecy” in announcing and accomplishing the Plan of God.

Part three, “**The Way of God**”, considers God’s requirements for human beings and what we must do to participate in the Plan of God. Specifically, it discusses “Living by the Way of God”, God’s revelation to humanity via “General Revelation” and “Special Revelation”. The Bible contains revelation from God to man over thousands of years – specifically, there were “Three Great Periods of Revelation”, and an ongoing collection of “Wisdom Literature”. Part three ends with the last word “**God is Love**”.

Please take the time to also read parts two and three!

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