

‘How great Thou art’  
 “Such knowledge is too wonderful for me.”  
 RESPECT FOR ALMIGHTY GOD

Lesson One

The name “God” is the Bible’s name for the divine nature which is possessed by the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The purpose of this series of lessons is to add to our knowledge of how great our God is. Before beginning this study, we are aware that a full knowledge of this subject is unobtainable to us, because His greatness is far beyond human comprehension. Notice David’s disclaimer under the title above. However, we can understand many things that we may not have known before. We associate daily with people whose conversation indicates they do not give God a second thought. For Christians Sunday is a special day that we worship God on. Seemingly most people never seem to give God a single thought on this special day. To many, Sunday is considered a day you can do anything you want to do from watching a ball game on TV, mowing the lawn, sleeping late, go fishing, visit friends and relatives, etc., etc. In our present contemporary culture, many religious gropes are seeing a decline of attendance. Many feel America has now reached what they call the post Christian age.

Even among active Christians some have not come to the realization of just how great our God is. The name “God” can become nothing more than just a word. We have not learned as much as we could have learned. Our lack of knowledge about God may be due in part to the fact that many of us are not frequent readers of the Bible. Paul reminds us that our faith comes about by hearing His word (**Romans 10:13**). This includes reading also. Our purpose then in this series will be to expand our knowledge on how great and loving our God is. There will always remain many things we would like to know, but we can expand our knowledge on certain things that we may not have thought of before. This series of lessons on “**How Great Thou Art**” hopefully will leave us with a desire to give Him greater honor and respect because of who He is.

God himself reminds us, “**For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways declares the Lord. 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). The apostle Paul declares, “**Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counsel? Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?**” (Romans 11:33-35). This takes away any bragging we might boast about our knowledge and understanding of the Godhead. Again, we must remind ourselves that it is impossible to fully grasp and articulate the full awesomeness of God. While God is beyond our ability to fully comprehend, yet, this must not deter us from learning all that we can.

Robert Herrick wrote, ‘**Tis hard to find God, but to comprehend Him, as He is, is labour without end.**’ Great hymns such as, “**How Great Thou Art**”, plus many other great hymns help us to express our admiration for God’s greatness and what he has done for us. When we finish this series hopefully we will be able to sing with greater feeling, show more respect for His word, and express more awe for what he did for us on the cross. We need to progress from factual knowledge to a deeper spiritual outlook. Worship can be the most meaningful time of the week for us. For example, Hymns tend to stir our emotions and make us feel closer to the Lord. Hymns tend to move us to greater spiritual heights. They are more than just words that come from the mouth. It is a recognition of the greatness of God. Take a look at one of the great hymn we often sing.

**How Great Thou Art**

**For You are great and do marvelous deeds. – Psalm 86:9-10**

O Lord my God! When I in awesome wonder consider all the worlds Thy hands have made,  
 I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder, Thy power throughout the universe displayed.  
 When thru the woods and forest glades I wander and hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees;  
 When I look down from lofty mountain grandeur and hear the brook and feel the gentle breeze.

And when I think that God, His Son not sparing, sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in.  
 That on the cross my burden gladly bearing. He bled and died to take away my sin.  
 When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation and take me home, what joy shall fill my heart!  
 Then I shall bow in humble adoration and there proclaim, my God how great Thou art!

### REFRAIN

Then sings my soul, my Savior God to Thee, How great Thou art, how great Thou art!  
Then sings my soul, my Savior God to thee; How great Thou art, how great Thou art!

As we talk to God in prayer there is a feeling of security within us simply knowing He is listening and welcomes our petitions. God also appreciates our expressions of thanksgiving for all He does for us. He knows that we rely on Him for our very existence. There is something humbling and cleansing as we partake of the Lord's Supper each week. The time we spend in partaking of the Lord's Supper lets the Lord know that we will never forget the great sacrifice He made that we might be cleansed from our sins. He knows we are keeping alive and fresh in our memories His crucifixion. The death of Jesus on the cross is the very heart and core of the Gospel. He is pleased when He sees us read with great respect from His Word. The preaching of the gospel is special in that it strengthens us as well as bringing those, outside of Christ into fellowship with Him by hearing His word declared and submitting themselves to His will. Our giving is special to Him as it shows that we want to see the gospel carried into all the world.

Worship is a great privilege. We should look forward to worship. It can be one of the most difficult responsibilities we engage in. It requires concentration. It is so easy for our minds to wonder; thus, we fail to really enjoy worship. We are to worship God **"in spirit and truth."** Sometimes we fail to worship in Spirit. There will always be unavoidable distractions at times during worship. But we need to prompt ourselves and refocus our minds back to worship. Also, some look upon worship as a duty and thus miss out on the spirit of worship. Duty can rob us of the joy of worship. David said, **"I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord"** (Psalm 122:1). **Are we glad when we know worship is approaching?** Like David we need to rejoice when we see that the hour of worship is approaching.

### HOW GREAT THOU ART

**"Such knowledge is too wonderful for me"**

#### NAMES OF GOD

#### Lesson Two

God is called by many Hebrew names in the Bible. Many of these names might be designated as descriptive names. They help us to understand who God is. A few are listed below.

**ADONAI** .....The LORD, MY GREAT LORD He is our total authority. **Isaiah 40:3-5**

**EL**.....THE STRONG ONE. More powerful than any pagan god. **Exodus 15:2**

**EL ELYON**.....THE God of Israel. Name Abraham gave to an altar. **Genesis 33:20.**

**ELOHIM**.....THE ALL-POWERFUL ONE, THE CREATOR. **Genesis 1:1**

**EL OLAM**.....THE ETERNAL GOD, THE EVERLASTING GOD.

**IMMANUEL**.....GOD WITH US. **"I AM."** **Matthew 1:23**

**JEHOVAH**.....THE ONE WHO IS THE SELF-EXISTENT ONE. God never changes **Exodus 3:14**

**JEHOVAH- JIREH**.....THE LORD WILL PROVIDE. **Genesis 3:14**

**YAWH**...(YAH-way)....GOD'S PERSONAL NAME. The Jews felt His name to sacred to be pronounced. They used the name Adonai. **"God said, to Moses, I Am who I Am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: I am has sent me to you. Say to the Israelites, the Lord, the God of your fathers – the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God Jacob – has sent me to you. This is my name forever, the name by which I am to be remembered from generation to generation"** (Exodus 3:14-15).

The phrase **"I Am who I Am"** has received much attention through the ages as to its exact meaning and has been debated. The name, **"I Am,"** became so revered by the Jews that they refused to speak it. It was so sacred they feared that they might show irreverence by speaking it as they might pronounce it improperly. In most English versions, it is translated as the **Lord**. Transliterated, it is **Yahweh**. Originally it was composed of four consonants **YHWH** with vowels added later on. Again, to the Jews the name was too scared to pronounce. The name **"Lord"** is used more than 6800 times in the Hebrew text of the Bible.

There are some other interesting names that God is known by.

He is referred to as a rock. **"I will proclaim the name of the Lord. Oh, praise the greatness of our God! He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he."**

He is looked upon as a king. Isaiah saw the Lord seated upon a throne and exclaimed, **“My eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty.”** Isaiah 6:5

He is referred to as a **Shepherd**. He is called the Shepherd of Israel.

He is called the **First and Last** in **Isaiah 44:6**. God uses this name to affirm there are no other gods.

He is also called **Master**, and **Owner**. These denote absolute ownership. God’s name is to be treated with the greatest reverence and respect. The son of an Israelite woman blasphemed the name of God. We are told that they brought him to Moses and put him in custody until the will of God was made clear to them. The Lord responded, **“Take the blasphemer outside the camp. All those who heard him are to lay their hands on his head, and the entire assembly is to stone him.** God further instructs the Israelites: **“If anyone curses his God, he will be held responsible; anyone who blasphemes the name of the Lord must be put to death”** (Leviticus 24:11-15). God expects the utmost respect when we use His name.

After Israel worshipped the golden calf at the foot of Mount Sinai, Moses pleaded with God not to destroy the people. God’s answer to Moses was, **“Do not worship any other God for the Lord; whose name is Jealous, He is a jealous God”** (Exodus 34:14). It disturbs God when man will turn to lifeless images and give them the praise, adoration and respect that they should be giving to Him only. God is a jealous God. He is the only one that should be worshiped.

It is common today to hear God’s name used in a disrespectful way. One expression we often hear is when someone sees something that excites, or thrills them they often respond with the expression “Oh My God.” God’s name must be respected and not used as a response to something frivolous. Often God’s name is used as a curse word by someone who is angry or agitated at something or someone. God’s name is often used in a flippant way as in a joke or a funny story someone is telling. Again, this is disrespectful to the eternal God who created us. Paul said to the Athenians, **“For in Him we live and move and exist”** (Acts 17:28). We owe everything to the Lord, even our existence. He deserves our greatest respect.

#### Psalm 113:1-6

**Praise the Lord. Praise, O servants of the Lord, praise the name of the Lord. Let the name of the Lord be praised, both now and forevermore. From the rising of the sun to the place where it sets, The Lord is exalted over all the nations, His glory above the heavens. Who is like the Lord our God, the one who sits enthroned on high, Who stoops down to look on the heavens and the earth? He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap; he seats them with princes, with the princes of their people. He settles the barren woman in her home as a happy mother of children. Praise the Lord.**

God should be the object of all our desires, the end of all our actions, the principle of all our affections, and the governing power of our whole souls. Jean Baptiste Massillon

### **HOW GREAT THOU ART** **“Such knowledge is too wonderful for me.”** **GOD, SPACE AND TIME** **Lesson Three**

One of the most difficult things for us to comprehend is the relationship between God, Space and Time. We might begin this study with a question – **what is time? Where did it come from?** Man has divided the earth into 24 time zones. The International Date Line has been set in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. On the west side of that line, a new day begins whereas on the east side of that line the day ends. As an example, if you are living in Texas and place a phone call to Australia at 11 a.m. Tuesday morning, then at the same moment a person in Australia picks up the phone to answer, the time there will be 2 a.m. Tuesday. During WW II I actually went completely around the world backwards and when crossing the International Date Line, I lost a complete day out of my life which I have never regained.

**So, what is this thing we call time?** It was created by God for the use of man. It is an abstract concept so we do not expect an answer that adequately tells us all we would like to know. It is the universal frame in which God sees all events that have happened as well as those yet to take place.

It is as if God can look down from heaven and see all events that have happened and those yet to happen. Time had a beginning and eventually it will have an end. We would not be able to function effectively without time to tell us when to carry out our earthly plans. Without time, we would have total confusion as all our earthly actions would be very dysfunctional. Without time, everything would be happening all at once. So, God made time strictly for the benefit of mankind.

There are certain passages that tell us when time began and also when time will end. **Genesis 1:1** tells us emphatically when time began. **“In the beginning God created the heavens and earth.”** Before this there was no time only eternity. Time was inserted inside of eternity by God for man’s convenience. The Bible also tells us when time will come to an end. **“And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”** No one can give a date for its beginning or a date for its ending. There has been much speculation but only Gods knows the answers. Peter tells us **“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise and the elements will melt with fervent heat: both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up”** (2 Peter 3:10). Thus, time will cease to exist.

God divided day into two units - day and night. The Babylonians began their day at sunrise. For the Jews, their new day began at sunset. The Egyptians and Romans began their day at midnight. This is the time that we and most other nations begin our day. A day has been divided into twenty-four hours. This was probably done by the ancient Babylonians. They also divided the hour into sixty minutes and a minute has been divided into 60 seconds. It is clear that the origin of the week rests squarely on God’s sovereign choice to create all things in six days and then rest on the seventh day. The Roman Army had their nights divided into **“watches”** of three hours.

At first sundials seem to have been the main method of determining what time of the day it was but they would have been useless at night. It would be difficult if not impossible for society to function in today’s world without time. The modern day atomic clock makes it possible now to be more accurate than using any other physical device.

God dwells eternally in heaven. He lives outside of time and space. **“For thus says the High and Lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy.... I live in a high and holy place”** (Isaiah 57:15). This is why He can be our judge because he can always see everything men think, say, and do. It also explains why he could inspire the prophets to foretell events in the future because he can see every event that has happened and every event that will happen. **“From heaven, the Lord looks down and sees all mankind; from his dwelling place he watches all who live on earth”** (Psalm 33:13). Since he dwells in heaven this is the same as saying he lives in eternity. God sees all of mankind and everything they are doing. Also remember God is Omniscient which is a subject we will study later.

To God, time means nothing. One thousand years is a day to God and a thousand years is the same as a day as far as God is concerned. Thus, God lives eternally. He lives in eternity for heaven is eternity. God can and does choose to come to earth and enter time for special occasions but He is not bound by time. Jesus surrendered to God’s thoughts and ways which are not always the same as our thoughts and ways. **“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord”** (Isaiah 55:8). Time only affects us in the physical world, but not God and all other beings who are in heaven such as the Godhead and all the angels who are also in the spiritual world. God then is outside of time. With God, it is always **NOW**. This is one of those difficult concepts that is hard for us to grasp. Difficult as it may be the correct basis for our understanding of time is to realize that God is outside of time.

**What about space?** You cannot have space without time. Neither can you have space and time without God. Space is just as real as the sun, moon and stars. **Is there an edge to space? Is space circular so that if you departed from a point then in time you would arrive back at the same point where you started your space trip?** Some scientist would say space is nothingness while others claim that it is a grayish matter of some kind that fills in around the billions of celestial bodies that make up our universe! **If it were possible to reach the edge of space what then would you find beyond space? Does space continue on beyond what we can see through telescopes?** Our modern telescopes delve into the deepest parts of space but they can only go so far. As you can see we are getting in way over our heads. Only God who created space knows the answer to all our questions about space. We can only look in amazement at what our God has done. Truly we can sing, **How Great Thou Art**. The creation of the universe should cause us to have the greatest awe and respect for our God.

How does Christ relate to space, time and matter? “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In Him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it” (1 John 1:1-5). The Holy Spirit was involved in creation also as He is mentioned as having a part in the creation. “The Spirit of God was hovering over the waters” (Genesis 1:2).

**HOW GREAT THOU ART**  
 “Such knowledge is too wonderful for me.”  
**GOD THE FATHER IS ETERNAL.**  
 Lesson Four

Standing first in the Godhead is God the father. It is difficult to discuss God with accuracy as we are limited to using finite words to describe Him. The word “eternal” is a term beyond our comprehension. There is neither beginning nor is there an ending for God. Psalm 90:2 says, “From everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.” God Existed before time and will exist after time comes to an end. We have already noticed that God created time for man’s use.

**GOD OUR FATHER IS OMNISCIENT.**

The word omniscient does not appear in the Bible but can apply to God. It simply means “without limitations.” He is without any limits in his knowledge. He knows the height of the mountains, the number of hairs on our head, the cause of cancer, how long the world will last, etc. Any discovery of man, God already knows about it because he created it to begin with.

God our father knows every move we will ever make. He knows our hearts, thoughts and motives. Hebrews 4:13 says, “Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.” The father’s providence rests upon his omniscience. Joseph is a good example. Joseph told his brothers, “God sent me before you to preserve life.” With the Psalmist we must say, “Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is too high, I cannot obtain it.”

**GOD OUR FATHER IS OMNIPOTENT**  
 “The Lord omnipotent reigneth.” (Revelation 19:6).

This means the Father is limitless in power. It is impossible to conceive of God being limited in any way except that he can limit himself.

His power brings to our minds the creation of the universe. Just think, he spoke it into existence the universe from nothing. The vastness of space boggles our minds. In our Galaxy alone, (Milky Way), there are at least 8.8 billion stars. Billions of planets about the size of the earth orbit stars just as our sun. There are thousands of other Galaxies. The Hebrew writer speaks of God “upholding all things by the word of his power” (1:3). Just as quickly he can end all things (2 Peter 3:7-12).

Also, there is his spiritual creation. This brings to mind heaven, the angels, that part Jesus is preparing for the redeemed.

**GOD OUR FATHER IS OMNIPRESENT**

While this word is not found in the Bible yet it described a characteristic of God. It means that God is present everywhere at once. “Do I not fill heaven and earth? Saith the Lord” (Jeremiah 23:24). We are surrounded with pictures and words we cannot see, feel or hear. Our incapacity to see them does not mean they do not exist. They reach us by invisible waves such as radio, TV, and cell phones. We need special receivers to receive these signals. Our incapacity to see, hear or feel God’s presence does not mean He is not near at this moment. It is his decision not to reveal himself in some visible form and speak in audible languages. His written word is sufficient. It does require faith on our part.

This to some seems hard to believe since we cannot see, feel, hear or know that God is present. Psalms 139:1-12 is clear about the presence of the Lord. “If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, surely the darkness shall cover me; even the



night shall be light about me. Yea the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day; the darkness and the light are alike to thee.”

The indwelling of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in us can be better understood when we accept the omnipresence of God. I accept the fact that cell phone, radio and TV waves are all around me. It is just as easy to believe in the indwelling of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The important question for us is what does this indwelling do for us or do we reject it?

### GOD THE FATHER IS SOVEREIGN

If God is in total control and has already planned all things according to his purpose how can man be free to choose? The Bible teaches that while God is in control of his creation he has given man the freedom to choose his own actions. Even though God is in complete control of his creation yet he never forces anyone to do anything against his will. God incorporated freedom of choice into his creation but the best choice is the recommendation of Jesus, “**Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest**” (Matthew 11:28).

If God has planned all things according to his purpose how can prayer change things? James says, “**The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much**” (James 5:16). God is able to “**Declare the end from the beginning,**” because both appear simultaneously to him. Remember it is always ‘**now**’ with God. Nothing that happens surprises him or catches him off guard. He saw every event before the world was created. Thus, He considered our requests before we ever uttered them.

God has made full allowance for our prayers. He allows our prayers to be a part of his plan and purpose. He can allow our prayers to enter into events and also arrange the events to fit the request of our prayers. What about unanswered prayers? God has taken all prayers into account and how others might be affected by our requests. The population of our world has now reached seven and a half billion. It is simply amazing that He knows about me - just a little speck on this earth. Yet He hears my prayers and knows all that I do. What is the best answer to your prayers? A no answer must be accepted in faith. By answering no it may in some way bring about good to many who we do not even know about. God hears and knows the best answer. By faith we accept his answer even though we may not know why we do not always get the answer we want. We may get a yes answer but it is being delayed for a purpose we do not know about.

### HOW GREAT THOU ART

“**Such knowledge is too wonderful for me**”

### THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD CONTINUED

#### LESSON FIVE

We have been discussing the prayers that we offer up to God and how prayer can change everything but some-times an opposite event occurs when we have prayed for something we feel is important. When an opposite event occurs, your prayer has not been ignored. It has been considered and possibly refused for your ultimate good and the good of the entire universe. When I pray I feel it is just the Father and me which is true. I forget that at the same moment there are thousands of other prayers that are going up to our God some at the same time. Mine may conflict with someone else. He has to take into account all requests that are made. My special request may not be best for me or someone else or for others.

There are alternative answers to any request that we may ask. Christ’s death on the cross is one of the greatest examples that we can give. His request was, “**Father if it be thy will, let this cup pass from me**” meaning his death on the cross. In this case there was no other alternative but for Jesus to die if men were to be rescued from sin. Note that Jesus takes into account God’s will over his own will, even though he was the son of God.

The Christian receives joy in knowing every prayer he or she utters is heard by God! God answers by giving us what is best for us at the time and everyone else who may be involved. It is no wonder that Paul said to “**pray without ceasing.**” He wants to hear our requests.

Romans 11:33-36 says, “**Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God. How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?**”

Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him? For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.”

### GOD OUR FATHER IS LOVE

One thing we know about the divine essence of God is that God is love. This is not all but certainly one of his reigning attributes. In fact, love originated with God. We would never know what love is if he not loved us. John says, “We love Him because He first loved us.”

If God is love, then why has he allowed sin, evil, pain, suffering, sickness and death to exist in the world? Can these things be reconciled with love?

From Genesis 1 & 2 it is evident that man was created with the freedom of choose good or evil, to believe or disbelieve, obey or disobey, to love or hate. To create a world without all of these choices would have made man a robot incapable of manifesting any love to anyone. He would only do what he was programmed to do. Because man was given the freedom of choice, unfortunately he has chosen to live in violation of God’s will. In giving man the freedom of choice, God had to risk the probability of man’s rebelling against his creator. So why place man here in the first place? God knew very well what man would do. Thus, before man came into existence God planned for man’s redemption. The answer is found in Ephesians 1:4 “According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.”

But shouldn’t the eternal death of one person be too much for a loving God to endure? Why didn’t he drop his plan of creation since man would turn out to be so rebellious? God has not told us why? The answer to this may lie in the depths of God’s eternal love. An illustration may help. On our wedding day, we make vows of commitment to someone we truly love for life. This includes all the sickness and health that may come. At some point, there will be death which separates us.

Thus, we make our commitments already knowing there will be difficult times. We accept this kind of uncertain future because we believe the present moment of giving ourselves to one another in love is worth any loss or hardships we may suffer in the future. God could have felt our love for him would be worth far more than what he would lose. Love far surpasses our losses.

Also, we know God is able to bring about blessings out of hardships. The sin that brought about the terrible crucifixion of our Lord caused our redemption. God chose the very best plan. Again, “Such knowledge is too wonderful for me.” Truly God’s knowledge is beyond our comprehension. However, we believe and trust him to cause all things to work together for our good

### WHAT SHOULD BE OUR RESPONSE?

1. Realize that human sufferings can have a meaningful purpose which we cannot always fathom.
2. Realize it will only be temporary. “For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.
3. We should expect some suffering simply because men have set themselves up in opposition to God’s divine will. (See 1 Peter 4:12-14.) Christians living in our nation have not experienced such hardships as existed in the first century but we may be getting closer than we realize.
4. Finally, we should rejoice that God will turn it all into good.
5. Again, remember that God’s thoughts are not our thoughts nor are his ways like our ways. We cannot think on the same level that God thinks on. There are many things that we cannot understand which will happen to us. We accept them because knowing that we have a loving God who loves us very much and will do what is best for us. We trust him because he will never fail us.

6. God gives us a choice. We may think we know better than God, but we don't. We recognize God's truth is absolute and without any fault. We can be assured he is doing what is best for us.

**HOW GREAT THOU ART**  
 "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me."  
**GOD THE SON**  
 Lesson Six

Having considered God, the Father we turn our attention to God the Son. It may feel a little strange to say, "God the Son" as we tend to think of the father only as being God and that Jesus is not on the same level as God the Father. But Jesus was just as much God as was the Father. We specifically assign unto him the work of incarnation. The literal meaning of "incarnate" is to embody the flesh. This is the event whereby the Eternal Word (God) would embody flesh. He appeared on earth being 100% human, possessing all the faculties of manhood. John wrote, "And the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us and we beheld his glory, the glory of the only begotten of the father, full of grace and truth (John 1:14).

A very important passage which reveals this truth is (Philippians 2:5-8). "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but emptied Himself by taking the form of a servant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross." This one act in itself deserves our eternal praise and admiration. In becoming flesh, He left heaven and all its glories. This meant that during his earthly sojourn it was necessary for him to live under human limitations. This involved the miraculous conception and virgin birth of Jesus foretold in Isaiah 7:14. In becoming flesh, Jesus assumed more than a human body. He assumed human nature as well. He had human flesh and blood, a human mind, human emotions, human blood and flesh, a soul, and a spirit.

So, Jesus was not only 100% God, he was also 100% man too but he gave up his divine nature to take on human nature. This is just one of the amazing facets of the Godhead that is difficult for us to understand. How could he be both? When we come into contact with the many facets of the Godhead which are beyond our ability to comprehend it should humble us and also at the same time increases our appreciation for who our God is! When we come across such attributes of greatness we are made to realize he deserves our praise and honor throughout eternity. One day we shall meet our God and see him in all his glory. What a day that will be. "Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen." (1 Timothy 1:17).

Just think about what he did. The Son was willing to deny himself of the use of his divine attributes. He relinquished his glory that he had with the Father and the Holy Spirit. His glory which he had in heaven became veiled with human flesh just as a bright light can be diminished by a filter. The filter does not make the light itself any less bright but simply limits the extent to which it can be used. Philippians 2:8 says that Jesus "humbled himself." He was willing give up the glory he had in heaven and to receive rejection on earth, even to being abused and made to suffer shamefully on a Roman cross. He loved us so much that he was willing to become a sacrifice for our sins by dying on the cross. While his divine attributes were always present, only occasionally did they show such as the time when he was transfigured on the mountain. He admonished the three disciples who were with him at the time not to tell anyone what they had witnessed. He did not seek fame and the praise of men.

It was decided by the Godhead even before the foundation (creation) of the world "that we (the redeemed) should be holy and without blame before Him in love." (Ephesians 1:4). How could this become possible? Paul wrote in Ephesians 4:25-27, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such things; but that it should be holy and without blemish." He had to enter the world by his birth to a young woman who did not understand what was happening but accepted it because it was the Holy Spirit that would bring the child into this world. He had to grow up as a child, learning and developing all the time as he grew into manhood. He allowed himself to become flesh to the extent he could be tempted just as we are tempted by none other than Satan himself.



Man's only hope was to be reconciled to God. This was possible only through the Word becoming flesh. Paul writes, "We were reconciled to God by the death of his Son" (Romans 5:19). Paul wrote, "You who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and irreproachable in his sight."

Another word that is most fitting to describe the Lord's mission is the word "redemption." To redeem is to repurchase. It can mean to buy something back. This is precisely what had to be done for man. He had to be brought back to God. Because of his sins he had drifted away from God. He was lost, unsaved and needed to be redeemed. Again, we read the words of Paul in Ephesians 5:25-27 writes, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

Another important word that is associated with God the Son is the word, "atonement." When offenses are committed justice must be satisfied. Under Old Testament law, when man offended God and his law, there had to be something sufficient to meet and satisfy the claims of justice. For centuries, this was the mystery of mysteries. Only the blood of Christ, the only begotten of God the Father could satisfy this need for justice. "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Corinthians 5:21). Thus, it was the responsibility of the second person in the Godhead to accomplish this great feat through His incarnation and his death on the cross. This work was distinctively that of the God the Son. This work will continue until death is destroyed. Paul writes, "For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (1 Corinthians 1:25-26). His final work will be to sit in judgment. "And before him shall be gathered all the nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats" (Matthew 25:32). Again, we must say, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me."

**HOW GREAT THOU ART**  
 "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me"  
**GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT**  
**LESSON SEVEN**

God, the Holy Spirit, is one of the most important subjects in the Bible. It is also one of the most controversial and neglected subjects in the Bible. Part of this is because it has been difficult for some to think of the Holy Spirit as being God. Thus, less attention is given to the Holy Spirit. There are many who think the subject of the Holy Spirit should be left alone because there are too many mysteries concerning the Spirit. There are so many false teachings about the Spirit that many no doubt are very confused and wish to leave the subject alone. But the Bible speaks of the Holy Spirit in numerous passages. While there are many mysteries there is much to be learned about who he is and what his work is.

**FIRST, WE NEED TO RECOGNIZE THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT IS GOD**

The Holy Spirit is a person. John 16:13-14 speaks directly on this truth. "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you".

In these verses, the Holy Spirit is referred to nine times by the use of the personal pronoun, masculine gender, singular number. The Holy Spirit then is not an "it" or a "thing." The Holy Spirit is a Divine being, the third person in the Godhead.

Jesus has commanded us to be baptized in "The name of the father, and of the son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19). In 2 Corinthians 13:14 we have the apostle Paul invoking "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit" upon the Corinthians. Then at the baptism of Christ we have "The Spirit of God descending like a dove.... a voice from heaven saying, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased'" (Matthew 3:16, 17).

It should be clear that the Holy Spirit is God, a part of the Godhead who is a coequal person, yet, distinct in personality.

Some say the Godhead is a threefold manifestation of one person. This would make the Godhead one person. Others would say there are three Gods, but this ignores the unity of the Godhead.

There is one Divine essence (**substance**) but there are three who possess this one essence. Certainly, this is difficult to understand but nevertheless we accept it by faith. Even if God had revealed this mystery in detail it is doubtful our finite minds could comprehend how three can be one. God has revealed all he wants us to know on this subject. For the present and we must be willing to be satisfied with what he has revealed even though we could not comprehend it. We will have to be patient and wait until we get to heaven to understand the divine essence of the Godhead. One of the exciting things about heaven is that we shall see, hear and understand so much more than we do now. For the present

**“Such knowledge is too wonderful for me.”**

#### **BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

The expression **“Baptism of the Holy Spirit,”** is a figure of speech. So is the expression **“I will pour forth of my Spirit.”** There is no literal pouring since he is not a liquid. Baptism is an overwhelming, a submerging, therefore it was simply an overwhelming by the Holy Spirit.

It was strictly a promise made primarily to the apostles. John the Baptist said, **“I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit, and with fire.”**

Jesus said, **“For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence”** (Acts 1:5).

Again, Jesus said, **“And behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you; but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high”** (Luke 24:49).

Just before ascending for heaven Jesus gave some parting words to his disciples on the Mount of Olives. **“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit come upon you”** (Acts 1:8).

The results of this baptism was twofold. **First**, it served to convince the people that the apostles spoke the truth. **Second**, with the coming of the Holy Spirit on the apostles the Holy Spirit would enable them to not only to speak in their own dialect but to speak in languages which they had never learned. Third, the Spirit enabled them to speak the truth. Jesus had promised them that the Holy Spirit would **“Guide you into all truth (John 16:13).”**

No one was ever commanded to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. It was only a promise. It never made anyone a Christian. Jesus referred to it as the **“Promise of the Father”** (Acts 1:4). There are only two times that it is recorded as happening. The apostles used this promise when they spoke to the people on the day of Pentecost. There were at least 15 nations represented there. When the apostles spoke, each person understood in their own native language. There were other miraculous things that happened such as the sound of a powerful wind. We see this gift happening again in **Acts 10** when Peter spoke to the household of Cornelius (**Gentiles**). We are told that the people who had come to hear Peter speak of Jesus soon began to **“speak in tongues an also to magnify God.”** This convinced Peter that the Lord accepted the Gentiles and wanted them to hear the gospel as well as the Jews.

In the beginning the Jews avoided the Gentiles but God is making it clear that he wants all people to have the opportunity to hear the gospel preached. In time, there would be far more Gentiles who would become Christians and Jews. The day before this Peter would not have gone to the Gentiles. Later on, Peter was called in by the Jews to explain his actions. After he explained the situation the Jewish brethren also came to believe that God wanted the Gentiles to hear the gospel. Prejudice is often very hard to break down but the household of Cornelius speaking in tongues was clear evidence the gospel was to be preached to the Gentiles.

#### **HOW GREAT THOU ART**

**“Such knowledge is too wonderful for me.”**

#### **THE ORIGIN OF THE NEW TESTAMENT LESSON EIGHT**

All the gifts of the Holy Spirit eventually would pass away by the time the New Testament was completed. These gifts of the Holy Spirit would no longer be essential. People could read for themselves or have someone read to them from the inspired word which was by now in written form (**scrolls**) by the end of the century forming the New Testament. Since they did not have printing presses they could not have produced a large number of New Testaments because they were hand written. At first various letters were circulated among the different churches. In time, all the books would be brought together to form the New Testament. Later on, some individuals would become owners of a New Testament even though they would have been expensive to purchase. The New Testament was completed probably after the book of Revelation was written, but it would take time to get all the books into circulation among the churches. At first there would have been a need for interpreters (**inspired men**) to give the meaning of the many apocalyptic words and phrases found in this great book. (See Revelation 1:3)

### THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT WERE MIRACULOUS

Jesus speaks of these different gifts in giving the great commission to go and preach the gospel into all the world. **“And these signs shall follow them that believe. In my name shall they cast out devils: they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover”** (Mark 16:17, 18). The important thing to notice in these verses is that, **“these signs shall follow them.”** These gifts would be their credentials. They would be proof that those preaching the gospel were preaching the truth.

In **2 Timothy 4:20** Paul makes an interesting remark. **“Trophimus have I left at Miletus sick.”** Since Paul had the power to heal **why didn't he heal Trophimus?** Obviously because the purpose this particular gift was not for every sick person. It was for the purpose of verifying or confirming the word of God. The same was true with all those who went out to preach the gospel. They had signs, wonders, and miracles to prove that God was guiding them as they preached the gospel.

Nicodemus in speaking with Jesus said, **“We know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him”** (John 3:2). The same was true with those who later went out to preach the gospel. They had signs, wonders, and miracles to prove that God was with them as they spoke the gospel.

In **1 Corinthians 12:4** Paul said there were a **“diversity of gifts” given by the Holy Spirit to the church.** In its infancy without the written word (**the New Testament**) there was a special need for these gifts. Paul names nine distinct gifts that were in use as the gospel began to spread.

### THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT WERE GIVEN TO THOSE WHO PREACHED THE GOSPEL.

- (1) Word of wisdom – doctrines of the gospel as possessed by the apostles and evangelist.
- (2) Word of knowledge – given to preachers to reveal the mystery hidden since before the foundations of the world. (See **Ephesians 1:9-10**)
- (3) Faith – a special faith that enabled one to do miracles.
- (4) Gifts of healing – miraculous healing of diseases.
- (5) Working of miracles – probably greater things than healings.
- (6) Prophecy – the ability to foretell future events such as Agabus.
- (7) Discerning of spirits – the ability to identify and expose false teachers.
- (8) The ability to speak in languages they did not know. This would be valuable on distant mission fields where you might not know their native tongue.
- (9) Interpretation of tongues – often this was necessary for those who did not understand the tongues being spoken.

It is interesting that among those who make the claim that the gifts of the Holy Spirit still exists today, only two of the nine gifts listed by Paul are supposedly performed today. Since nine gifts are mentioned by Paul shouldn't all nine of them be in existence today?

It should be observed that these gifts listed by Paul were bestowed on Christians by the laying on of the hands of the apostles. **Acts 8:15-17** is very clear on this matter. Philip who was an evangelist was in need of assistance in his work of preaching to the people of Samaria. The converts had increased to the point that there was a need for the Holy Spirit to come upon some of the new converts so they could now assist Philip.

Peter and John were dispatched from Jerusalem to help the situation. We are informed by Luke that “When they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit: for as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.” Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:15-17). Acts 19:6 tells us that Paul ran into some who had only been baptized into John’s baptism. Seeing their error, they “were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.”

Paul said that these gifts of the Holy Spirit were to last, “Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (Ephesians 4:13). To the Corinthians he wrote, “Whether there be prophecies, they shall vanish away.....but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away” (1 Corinthians 13:8, 10). That which is perfect is the “perfect law of liberty” mentioned in James 1:25.

With the completion of the New Testament there would no longer be any need for these gifts to prove the speaker’s words were true. The day would come when they would have the complete word for their proof. The gifts served their purpose there was no need for them. When the last apostle died there was no one left to bestow these gifts. These gifts were always bestowed by the laying on of the hands of the apostles.

**HOW GREAT THOU ART**  
**“Such knowledge is too wonderful for me.”**  
**THE AWESOMNESS OF GOD**  
**LESSON NINE**

The awesomeness of our God is tremendous. His works are so profound that they are beyond our comprehension. In a negative sense the word “**awesome**” can be intense fear mixed in with trembling as was the case of Saul when he realized that the one he had been persecuting was Jesus speaking to him (Acts 9:5, 6). Awesome can also be used in a good sense as in **Philippians 2:12** where Paul writes, “**Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.**” Salvation is a serious matter and should be treated with the greatest amount of respect. God went to great extents to make it possible for man to have salvation. His plan took many years to be completed as it originated in heaven even before the world came into existence. When it finally became available many accepted it with great joy and appreciation while others rejected it and scoffed at those who risked their lives to carry the gospel into all the world.

It seems evident that Satan himself had no idea what God was up to when he gave so much emphasis to the old testament sacrificial laws that He gave to the Jews. Then when Jesus came Satan did what he could to prevent Jesus from accomplishing any mission he might be on when he came to earth. Even right up to the time when Jesus was crucified on the cross I believe Satan did not understand what God’s plan was to redeem mankind. The prophets foretold many things about the coming of Jesus, even His death on the cross but even the prophets themselves did not understand what all was involved in their prophesies. It must have been a strange experience to write about things you did not know what you were writing about.

**GOD’S WAYS AND THOUGHTS ARE HIGHER THAN MAN’S**

Speaking of the awesomeness of God Isaiah wrote “**For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,**” says the Lord. **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). No one can out guess God and His word. The word “**Awe**” has the meaning of showing respectful fear and wonder at God’s

The word “**AWE**” itself carries with it the idea of respectful fear – wonder and reverence. It suggests a submissive and admiring fear of God and all of his works. Awe is fear mingled with reverence. Unfortunately, the word “**awesome**” has been trivialized by its use of any event or accomplishment that has nothing to do with God and His wisdom. The scriptures extol an awesome God. Only God is awesome. He needs to be viewed in this way.

“**Then the Lord said: “I am making a covenant with you. Before all your people I will do wonders never before done in any nation in all the world. The people you live among will see how awesome is the work that I, the Lord, will do for you” (Exodus 34:10). “Then the Lord said to Moses, write down these words, for in accordance with these words have I made a covenant with you and with Israel. Moses was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights without eating**

bread or drinking water. And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant – the Ten Commandments” (Exodus 34:27-28).

### ISAIAH HAS MUCH TO SAY ABOUT THE AWESOMENESS OF GOD

“Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, or with the breadth of his hand marked off the heavens? Who has held the dust of the earth in a basket, or weighed the mountains on the scales and the hills in a balance? Who has understood the mind of the Lord, or instructed him as his counselor? Whom did the Lord consult to enlighten him, and who taught him the right way? Who was that taught him knowledge or showed him the path of understanding? (Isaiah 40:12-14).

“To whom will you compare me? Or who is my equal? Says the Holy One. Lift your eyes and look to the heavens. Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one, and calls them each by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing. Why do you say, O Jacob, and complain, O Israel. My way is hidden from the Lord; my cause is disregarded by Israel, “My way is hidden from the Lord; my cause is disregarded by my God”? Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired and weary and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint. (Isaiah 40:25-31).

### CROSSING THE RED SEA IS AN EXAMPLE OF GOD’S AWESOMENESS

There were six hundred thousand men plus their families and their livestock, a total of two million people. They crossed the Red Sea in one night. It has been estimated that it would have required an opening of 3 miles and then have 5000 people to walk abreast to get everyone over in one night. This is not possible from a human standpoint. **But suppose God tinkered with time stretching it long enough to allow the people time to get across with all their animals?** Once God made the sun to stand still. **Could he not make the night longer?** This was a miraculous event. God is not controlled by time, rather He controls time. God does not have to use time to accomplish his purposes. We really don’t know how this was accomplished but God’s power is so great He could have accomplished it without any problems.

### GOD’S PROMISE TO ABRAHAM WAS FULFILLED.

When Israel arrived at Mount Sinai, it had been some 635 years since God had promised Abraham that he would make his descendents a great nation. **Why so long?** **“But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: with the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day (2 Peter 3:8).** It seems obvious that God accomplishes his purposes without having to use time to determine when certain events will occur. Remember God lives outside of time. He dwells in heaven which is eternal in nature having no beginning or ending.

### HOW GREAT ART THOU

“Such knowledge is too wonderful for me.”

### THE FEAR OF GOD

### LESSON TEN

For those who believe that God is all knowing, and is all powerful, and can be present at anyplace at anytime, then it is reasonable that we are indebted to show proper respect to the creator of our universe. **Proverbs 1:7** says, **“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline”.**

The dictionary defines fear as dread or terror. However, in this verse the writer is speaking specifically of reverential fear. It is a controlling motive of life in matters spiritual and moral. It is not a fear of God’s power and righteous retribution. It is a dread of displeasing Him. We want to please Him and when we do things that are wrong we realize we have sinned against God. We are determined not to oppose Him. It is our sincere desire to please Him simply because of who God is – the Creator of the universe and mankind. We do not want to do anything that would oppose His will. We will not hesitate to do His will.

Abraham is a great example of someone who had Godly fear. God tested Abraham by commanding him to offer his only son as a sacrifice. **“Then God said, ‘Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about.’”**



Abraham did not hesitate to do what God asked him to do. Abraham took Isaac, some wood, a donkey along with two servants and traveled to the place God had designated for Isaac to be sacrificed. Isaac did not know the real intention of this trip. Little did he recognize he was to be the sacrifice himself. He even inquired where they would get an animal. When they arrived, Abraham put the wood on Isaac and drew his knife to kill him. Can you imagine what Abraham was thinking all this time, but he did not want to oppose God's command. **What was Isaac thinking? Was he willing to be a sacrifice?** He drew his knife to plunge into the body of Isaac but suddenly an angel **"called out to him from heaven. Abraham! Abraham. Here I am he replied. Do not lay a hand on the boy, he said. Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son."** (Genesis 22:11, 12).

All mankind is told to fear God and keep his commandments. Moses speaking to the Israelites said, **"And now: O Israel, what does the Lord your God ask of you but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord you God with all your heart and with all you soul, and to observe the Lord's commands and decrees that I am giving you today for your own good"** (Deuteronomy 10:12-13).

At the Red Sea, Moses spoke to the Israelites and told them, **"Do not be afraid, God has come to test you, so that the fear of God will be with you to keep you from sinning."** (Exodus 20:20).

Peter encourages Christians **"Since you call on a Father who judges each man's work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear. For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect"** (1 Peter 1:17-19).

Peter admonishes Christians, **"Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as servants of God. Show proper respect to everyone: Love he brotherhood of believers, fear God, honor the king."** (1 Peter 2:17-19)

While on earth, Jesus displayed Godly fear. **"During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission"** (Hebrews 5:7).

In **Philippians 2:12-13** Paul instructed the saints about fear. **"Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose."**

In **Acts 9:31** we learn that the churches throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria were living **"in the fear of the Lord."**

Paul writes to the Christians in Corinth encouraging them to perfect their reverence for God. **"Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God"** (2 Corinthians 7:1).

**Ecclesiastes 12:13-14** gives some very good advice. **"Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the mater: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil."**

We are surrounded with all kinds of fear in our everyday living. The only way to get rid of this kind of fear is to respect God by respecting what has been given to us by the Holy Spirit. Godly fear is a healthy spiritual ingredient which we need on a daily basis.

We learn that Jesus had Godly fear (fear of failing God). **"During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission"** (Hebrews 5:7). The Lord has to be especially careful how he conducted himself in the flesh. One mistake could result in a failure of God's plan to redeem mankind. We are told by Luke the **"church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace. It was strengthened, and encouraged by the Holy Spirit; it grew in numbers living in the fear of the Lord."** Reverent respect for the Lord, his Word and the church will result in good things.

**HOW GREAT THOU ART**  
 “Such knowledge is too wonderful for me.”  
**THE HOLINESS OF GOD**  
**LESSON ELEVEN**

We often sing the hymn “**Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, Who was, and is, and is to come.**” (Revelation 4:8). I don’t think there is any way we can overdo our praise of God. The word “**Holy**” means bright, pure, perfect, untainted, deserving of our highest respect. God is separated from anything that is vile or evil. It would be impossible for him to be evil. Unfortunately, there have always been those who are angry at God and want to accuse Him of hurting them in some way. Many feel God did not answer their prayers and thus resent him. Such people do not realize that God is completely separated from anything evil or harmful to someone. If He gives a no answer to our prayer it may be the best answer one could receive.

Certainly, God would keep us from defilement or immorality by answering dangerous requests people make. He would keep us from false worship, heathen idolatry if by doing so he does not go against their free will. God created us with a free will to run our lives as we want to. He does not force us to obey him. Unfortunately, we clamor for things that could make us engage in sinful acts. Our freedom allows us to make very bad decisions and violate His law.

Holiness in the O.T. and in the N.T. is applied in the highest sense to God. No one is above or supersedes our God. His perfection is the most beautiful sights to be seen. He is the most beautiful example of moral excellence and perfection that we can find. We sing, “**Oh to be like Him.**” Why? Because of who He is. His perfect character serves as a model for us. Wouldn’t we all like to be like him! It is a challenge because we are so frail and weak at times that it is hard for us to be exactly like him. But we have a model we can be constantly looking at with the greatest admiration.

His holiness is like a magnet. It draws us closer to His side. We also sing, “**More about Jesus would I know.**” Why? To be like Jesus is a wonderful achievement. To feel clean and free from sin and its results is a feeling like no other. To be a part of the redeemed and experience the fellowship of those of like precious faith make life fulfilling as nothing else we might do.

**HOW DOES GOD SHOW HIMSELF HOLY?**

He is exalted over all the nations.

**The Lord reigns, let the nations tremble;  
 He sits enthroned between the cherubim, let the earth shake.  
 Great is the Lord in Zion, he is exalted over all the nations.  
 Let them praise your great and awesome name –he is holy.**

He loves justice: Psalms 99:4-5.

**The King is mighty, he loves justice – you have established equity;  
 In Jacob, you have done what is just and right.  
 Exalt the Lord our God and worship at his footstool, he is holy.**

Israel profaned the name of God by the way they lived. Ezekiel 36:22-23

**“Therefore say to the house of Israel, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am going to do these things, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations, the name you have profaned among them I will show the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, the name you have profaned among them. Then the nations will know that I am the Lord, declares the Sovereign Lord, when I show myself holy through you before their eyes.’”**

To profane is to show a lack of respect for God. It is to pollute; defile; the very opposite of sacred; unhallowed. We can see from the above scripture that God is very displeased when men profane His great name. Remember the name for God in Hebrew was considered so sacred that the Jews would not pronounce it.

He will punish but also forgive: Psalm 99:8-9.

**O Lord our God, you answered them; you were to Israel a  
 Forgiving God, though you punished their misdeeds.**

**Exalt the Lord our God and worship at his holy mountain,  
For the Lord, our God is holy.**

Think of justice, not vindication. Getting even contradicts God's nature; judgment (**justice**) does not. The holiness of God requires that He pronounce justice. If He neglects justice by overlooking sin, He would not be a holy God. God does not "get even" overlooking sin. He would not be a holy God. God does not "get even." He is imply being holy by punishing sin.

**How should Christians respond to God's holiness?**

Christians must be separated to God or set apart to God. Passages from Romans and Hebrews we learn how important holiness is to an individual.

**"But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. For the wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:22-23).**

**"Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness, no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many" (Hebrews 12:14-15).**

### **HOW GREAT THOU ART**

**"Such knowledge is too wonderful for me."**

#### **THE UNIVERSE**

#### **LESSON TWELVE**

At some point God created the **Universe (heavens and the earth) and Time**. The first verse in the Bible tells us, **"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1)**. To set a time when it began is futile for time did not exist until the creation. Both the universe and time had a beginning and will eventually have an end. Eternity never had a beginning and will never have an ending. It has always been so. This is where the Godhead and the angels exist. **What is time? Where did it come from? When did it start? When will it end?** We want to address these questions in this lesson as best as we can. Presently notice that on the opposite side of this sheet you will be looking at a blank sheet. In the middle of the blank sheet is a small blocked area. The blocked area represents the place where time, the earth, the universe and space exists. All four will cease to exist leaving only eternity heaven. This is a clumsy illustration. It is very difficult to understand these things because we cannot think on the same level as God. When we get to heaven we probably will as the song says we will, **"Understand it better by and by."** At present our faith keeps us from any doubts about creation, heaven and eternity.

**First**, eternity is beyond our comprehension. The study of eternity is difficult because it is not something mortal man can go and inspect and then come back and write about it. The dictionary says eternity has infinite duration, is everlasting, without intermission, is perpetual, seemingly endless, existing at all times. All we can say is what I used to say as a boy, that it is forever and ever and ever and ever and will never have an end. There never was a beginning and there will never be an end. By faith we accept the above poor illustration because we cannot describe it with human words. Heaven exists only in eternity. This is where God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the Angels dwell. Someday all the redeemed will also dwell there for eternity.

In **John 14:2** Jesus told his disciples **"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am."** This is one of the most comforting passages in the Bible, yet we still do not know what it will be like. Jesus assures His disciples that He will prepare a place for them. When God brings the world and time to an end all the redeemed will join Him to dwell there forever. Jesus said, **"I go to prepare a place for you!"** **Where is this place? We know it will be in heaven, but where is heaven?** Probably the best answer is, it will be in eternity. This boggles the mind. We really have no words to explain it.

Paul says he knew of a man who was caught up into heaven (**probably Paul himself**) and saw things that cannot be uttered. **"I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body**

or out of the body I do not know—God knows – such a one was caught up to the third heaven. And I know such a man—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows—how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter” (2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 12:2). The Jews had three heavens. The first one was the area where men and flying creatures live.

**Second**, was the area where all the stars exist. Third was heaven itself which they like us knew little about. It cannot be seen from the earth. It is beyond the universe. This is the place where God will dwell with us. According to the apostle John “He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain” (Revelation 21:4).

**Second**, with God, time has nothing to do with heaven. Time no longer exists. There is only eternity. On earth, we need time for without time everything would be happening all at once. There would be no minutes, hours days, or years to separate events. Since God created time He can and does choose to come to earth thus entering time for special occasions, but He is not bound by time by being on the earth. He has chosen to enter time on occasions when He felt His presence was needed. His entering time may have included such events as the crossing of the Red Sea, the 40 days he met with Moses on Mt. Sinai. John writes, “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). This seems to have been His longest earthly stay which was about 33 years. God has audibly spoken to man from heaven as there was no need for Him to enter time (earth).

**Third**, the little block in the middle of the blank sheet opposite this sheet represents time. **When did it come into existence?** It was on the first day of creation in the beginning. “God said, let there be light, and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. God called the light “day” and the darkness he called “night.” And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.” Time had its first 24 hour on the first day of creation.

**Fourth, what about space?** Space is a part of the universe. Space appears to be empty. It is called a false vacuum, yet we know it contains quantum particles. When viewed from earth the stars (celestial bodies) appear to be close to each other, but with the modern telescope it can be seen that the stars are millions of light years away from the earth and from each other. Space is unavoidable when we consider that the stars are so far apart. **When the earth and everything in it is destroyed, does that include time and space?** The answer is yes. Time is essential to space and space is essential to time. You cannot have one without the other. If there was no space the universe with all its celestial bodies would collapse onto each other and there would be no universe. Since God will destroy the universe maybe he will let it collapse and burn itself up. The little box in the middle of the blank sheet will be removed and only eternity and heaven will remain. What about hell? God has not revealed its location.

“I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life.

Revelation 21:22-27

### HOW GREAT THOU ART

“Such knowledge is too wonderful for me.”

### WHY BE A CHRISTIAN?

### LESSON THIRTEEN

The ultimate motivation for our becoming a Christian is to go to heaven where there is no sickness or death. Of course, there are other reasons such as relief from of sins, and being united God, Christ and the Holy Spirit. Also, to be with the angels, and all the redeemed from all ages. It will include loved one we left behind and former friends. There will be no sickness or death there. Think about it, heaven is where we will see God, Christ and the holy angels. Its beauty is spoken of in highly figurative language which makes us realize it will be the most beautiful place we can imagine, far more beautiful than we can imagine.

We would like to know more but the Lord has chosen not to furnish all the information we would like to have. The answer may be found in **2 Corinthians 12:2** where Paul writes, **“I know a man in Christ (some think it was Paul himself) who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a one was caught up to the third heaven..... He was caught up into Paradise and heard in inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.”** If the most gifted orator were to try to describe heaven using human speech he would utterly fail. Paul implies that the one caught up to heaven was not permitted to express what he saw. We will just have to wait till we get there. It will be worth the waiting.

The last two chapters of Revelation give us a description of the “crown of life” by using human words to describe heaven and all its glories. It sits on twelve foundations each of a different precious stone. Rising from its foundation is a solid wall of jasper with twelve gates of pearl. The holy city lies foursquare but it is also 1,500 miles wide, high and long which roughly is one half the size of the U.S. But remember this is human language we are reading, not the spiritual language spoken by the inhabitants of Heaven. We not have to learn a new language as we will be capable of speaking the language found there. John says that the city appears as a bride adorned for her husband. Nothing can enter this **“Holy City”** that would defile it. Its street is pure gold but also appears to be crystal. The tree of life is there which at first was in the Garden of Eden but is now transplanted in heaven. There will be no tears there, no death, no sorrow, no crying, nor any pain.

As far as we know God never allowed any human being to see him. Moses made a request to see God’s glory, but God did not allow him to see Him. He did allow Moses to see his back after he had passed by. Moses went up to the top of Mount Sinai and spent 40 days there receive God’s law, but evidently, he was not allowed to see God’s face. When he came down from the mountain Moses’ face glowed to such an extent he had to put on a veil so that the glory of God would not reflect off of Moses onto any of the people. Being in the presence of God made Moses’ face to radiate some of God’s glory. There is evidence that His glory is so great and wonderful that humans would die if they looked upon God’s face. Jesus says that the angels all see the face of God (**Matthew 18:10**). This is because they have spiritual bodies. We too will have spiritual bodies when we get to heaven and we will see the face of God. Life in heaven will be far different and superior than life here on earth. God has chosen to tell us about heaven using earthly metaphors and figures of speech which tell us something of heaven’s splendor. These words and phrases make us aware that heaven is the most beautiful and glorious place we can imagine. Even greater is the fact it will be for eternity. There will be no end to heaven.

In view of what lies ahead for the Christian Paul has admonished us to **“Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth.”** But the truth is few are not in a big rush to get there. The reason is that we have a fear of death and the unknown associated with death. No one has ever come back from death to tell us what it was like. It is true that death is an enemy of man. Jesus tells us that **“the last enemy to be destroyed is death”**. However, for the Christian there are some things that take away a lot of the fear of death. Paul says as we live the Christian life we reach the point where we can say, **“O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?”** (**1 Corinthians 15:55**).

Just think! In heaven, there will be no more temptations. Christians are aware that they must constantly fight against temptation. Paul addresses this problem in **Romans 7:15-25**. To sum up these verses Paul says, **“I really want to do right but I don’t. I do what I don’t want to do. I know it’s wrong but I do it anyway. When I try not to do wrong I do it anyway. My problem is that sin has me in its grasp.”** Often it seems like a constant uphill battle. When we overcome one sin, here comes another sin. When you think you have conquered something it suddenly returns! This is because Satan never lets up. Thank God, when we get to heaven there will be no more temptations from Satan and there will be no more Satan.

Guilt takes a heavy toll on a person. Guilt is behind many physical and mental disorders. Even faithful Christians often are the victims of guilt. Since God is so forgiving we often feel we are getting off to easy so we punish ourselves. David said, **“My sin is ever before me”**. (**Psalm 51:3**). He also said, **“Neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sins.”** (**Psalm 38:3**). No sin exists in heaven. Thus, we will be free of sin.

In heaven, there will be no more disappointments. Often it is someone we dearly love. Sometimes it is someone who on the outside appears to be very spiritual. It may be teacher, or a close friend, or a great leader, etc. Sometimes it happens in our families. It usually hurts here more than any other way.



Few are those who have not had someone in the family tree to prove an embarrassment or a disappointment. In heaven, there will be no more heartaches because all our tears shall be wiped away.

In heaven, there will be no more pain, disease or mental disorders. **Revelation 21:4** assures us that there will no longer be any pain. Some suffer pain constantly in this life but it will not exist in heaven. There will be no need for doctors, nurses nursing homes, hospitals or mental institutions. In heaven, there will be no more death. This “**last enemy of man**” will be swallowed up in victory. Even the Lord prayed to the Father, “**Father let this cup pass from me.**” We prefer not to talk about it. Satan’s temptation of Adam and Eve and their fall brought death to the human race. When Satan and his angels are ushered into hell there will be no more death.

**“Listen, I tell you a mystery: we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed --- in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.”**  
(1 Corinthians 15:51-52)