Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

God: Is He? Who Is He?
Scripture: Selected Scriptures
Code: 1351

This morning we're going to look at the first of this very brief series on the doctrine of God. "God: Is He? Who is He? And What Is He Like?" Usually we go through books, and we just have book studies, but for this brief time, a little study in theology, so keep your Bible handy, and we'll have you chase around and look up some scriptures in a minute. Will Durant said, quote, "The greatest question of our time is not Communism vs. individualism; it is not Europe vs. America, not even the East vs. the West; it is whether man can bear to live without God," end quote. I agree. I believe that the major issue in the world is the existence of God. Now, the Bible very definitely postulates God, and we who are Christians believe in God; that is the heart of our faith. The Bible says this about God in Psalm 90, verse 2: "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God." Now, there's a great doctrinal statement about God. It tells us that God is the only God, "Thou art God." It tells us that God is the eternal God, "from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God." It tells us that God is the creator God. "Before the mountains were made, before You formed the earth and the world" – that's quite a statement about God. God is the only God. God is the eternal God. God is the creator God.

Now, that Psalm, interestingly enough, was written by Moses, and Moses was expressing the character of God in contrast to the frailty of man. In verse 10, for example, of Psalm 90, he makes the statement that man lives 70 years, and if he's really strong he lives 80 years, but even after those 80 years, he finds that his strength, his labor and sorrow, it is soon cut off, and he says, almost pensively, we fly away. He shows the frailty of man, and the sinfulness of man, and against that he shows the refuge, the security, the eternal character of God.

In verse 1, for example, he says, "Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations." We've always found our refuge in You. We've always had to face our own inadequacies and our own frailties and we've always known that the only strength was Your strength. So we see God as the eternal one God, the creator God, the strength of His people. That is God, basically.

The question that comes to mind as we begin our look is the fact that some people say that Christians have simply invented this God. In fact, that everybody in the world who has religion has just postulated that religion, or been victimized by some forefather who did, when in fact, there really is no supernatural at all. And so we ask the first question on your outline: Is He? Is the God that the Bible claims exists really in existence? Is He?

Sigmund Freud said – and I don't often quote him – Sigmund Freud said that man created God. Which, of course, is the reversal of what the Bible says, that God created man. Freud said in his book *The Future of an Illusion* – and you'll recall that Freud was the Viennese psychiatrist who is given the responsibility of being the progenitor of modern psychoanalysis – but Freud said in his book *The Future of an Illusion* that "Man so desperately needs security, and because he has such deep-seated fears, and because he lives in a threatening world in which he has very little control over his circumstances, he invented God to get him out when he needed something." And in his book *The Future of an Illusion*, Freud said that God was invented by man for three reasons. Reason number one: man fears the unpredictability, the impersonality, and the ruthlessness of nature. In other words, he sees disease, and famine, and disasters, and he knows that he hasn't got any defense against any of these things, and so he postulates somebody somewhere who can deliver him. It's kind of like the guy on the South Sea Island, you know, who's living on a volcanic island from which there is no escape, he's isolated on an island. And he's sitting in his mud hut one day, doing whatever you do in a mud hut, certainly not sweeping the floor, but whatever, and he hears the rumblings, and the ground begins to rumble a little bit, and he does what he can do. It's something that happens once in a while. It's a volcanic island. He shores up his little hut, and he makes sure the kids are secure and everything's all right, comforts his wife a little bit, and then the rumblings become severe. He walks outside, looks up, and he sees lava blowing out of the top of the thing. Now he realizes that straightening up the shack isn't going to have a lot of effect, and neither is comforting the kids. When the lava starts pouring down the hillsides there's no way out, and so immediately he has only one thing, and that is to look to a sort of a supernatural, superhuman, skyhook to get him out. So Freud says he invents God.

The second thing that Freud said caused man to invent God was that man is afraid because of his relationships to his fellow man. Because man so very often feels that he always gets a raw deal from everybody else, he wants to postulate a sort of a divine umpire, a sort of a cosmic God with a super whistle, who ultimately can stop play and give everybody what they deserve; somebody who's going to make it right, even if you haven't been getting it right on the way. Freud thirdly said that man has invented God because he's afraid of death and extinction, so he wants to find a heavenly Father, a happy person somewhere, who will take him to a happy place, because he can't stand the fact that he would go out of existence. And so he postulates heaven.

Now, that is Freud's view of God. There is no God except in the figment of man's imagination. There is no proof for that. That was spawned out of his own corrupted mind, as were all of the other things that he generated. There isn't any proof for that whatsoever, and it's totally indefensible, and yet there have been myriads of people who have believed it. It even shows a rather simplistic, ignorant view of religion. For if you really examine religion, folks, you'll find out that when man does manufacture a god, he very rarely is a delivering god. He is usually an oppressive god which continually has to be appeased. Have you ever noticed that? I would rather disagree with Freud and postulate the very

opposite, and offer this for your thinking. I believe that man has not made God, but, in fact, if man had his way he would rather that God did not exist, he would rather eliminate God. In fact, if you really study history, you'll find that man, either philosophically or pragmatically, exists without God. He does the very best he can to eliminate God. He even comes up with theology that says God is dead. And even the people who can't cope philosophically with no God live as if there wasn't any.

For example, you go back to the garden, and the first thing that happens in the garden that we know about, apart from walking and talking with God, was sin. Right? Adam and Eve fell. What is the very first thing they did immediately after they fell? Immediately Adam and Eve hid themselves from whom? From God. They began to wish that God didn't exist, and that has been a constant thing with men throughout history. In fact, in Romans chapter 1, it tells us that God exists, and that men know that God exists in their heart. Right? "That which is known of God is in them." And it says in verse 20, "They knew God." Verse 2l, "They knew God." In verse 28 it says this, Romans 1:28, "But they did not like to retain God in their knowledge." Have you ever read that? Man has not made God, man has wished God not to exist.

And so I would say that Freud is dead wrong. Man has not invented God. And let me add this. Where men have invented gods, where men in false religions have invented gods, they are not super-protector gods, they are gods that men fear. You think the woman in India who takes her baby and throws it to drown in the Ganges River thinks of that god as a great savior, a great universal umpire, somebody to deliver her from her problems? Not on your life. She looks at that god as some great, fearful ogre who must be appeased. If man is inventing gods, he's sure inventing the wrong kinds. The fact of the matter is that the reason false systems of religion invent those kind of gods is because those kind of demons do exist, and are very active in their world. Man does not wish God into existence, man wishes God out of existence, if he had his way.

The evidence is pretty clear that God exists. I don't think that you can just strike aside all evidence, and postulate no God, and then invent a theory like man making God, without really ignoring some very startling truth. Theologians have cataloged the reasons we believe in God in many ways. One such catalog, I'll just list for you, I'm not going to spend a lot of time, but theologians say there are many reasons why we believe in God. And they can't prove God, but they can certainly show us that there's more reason to believe in God than reason not to believe in Him, right? Listen to this. As Christians, we accept one big miracle - God - one big miracle - God - and everything else makes sense. An atheist denies God, and has to have a miracle for every other thing. And they say it takes too much faith to believe in God. There's plenty of evidence.

For example, there's what theologians call a teleological argument. That comes from the Greek word *teleios*, which means perfection, or result, or end, or finish. We look at something that is perfected, or finished, or done, and we say it's a design, and it must have had a designer. You can take your watch apart and put all the pieces in your pocket and shake your leg a long time before you'll hear a tick.

You know when you're going to have something that works, somebody made it work. You see a piano, you don't assume there was, you know, an elephant that ran into a tree, and a guy sitting in the tree playing a harp, and it all fell together, and there it is – the whole thing, ivory, wood and strings. Ridiculous; absurd. Design implies a designer.

A second argument used for God's existence is the argument from ontology, the ontological argument. *Ontos* is a Greek participle referring to the verb "to be" - the being of God. The very fact that man can conceive of God in the terms that are truly God's character, indicates He exists. A third argument for God is from aesthetics. People say because there is beauty, and because there is truth, there has to be, somewhere in the universe, the standard on which beauty and truth are based. There is the volitional argument. Because man faces a myriad of choices, because man has a volition to make those choices, because there is an ability for a man to express an individual will, there must be somewhere an infinite will. And the world must be, as it is, the expression of that will. Then there is the argument from morality. The very fact that we know there is right and wrong suggests the necessity of an absolute standard.

A fellow came into me this morning after the second hour, and he said, "Well, I have a friend who doesn't believe there is any such thing as right and wrong. He says there is absolutely no right and no wrong." He said, "What can I say to him?" I say, "You go ask him if it's all right for him to take a machine gun and do something bizarre like just mow down a whole bunch of little schoolchildren in a school play yard. You ask him if that's right or wrong." A man would be an absolute idiot not to acknowledge at that point that there's something right, something wrong. And if there's anything right, and anything wrong, then somewhere there's a standard. And if there is a standard, then we'd better find out from that standard what else is right, and what else is wrong. That's the argument from morality.

Then there is the argument from cosmology – not as one person said, cosmetology – cosmology, big difference. Cosmology is the argument of cause and effect. You see, there are only two views of the universe; either God is, and that makes sense, or God is not, and then we've got some problems. For example, the equation of "God is not" is nobody times nothing equals everything. That's a little difficult to believe. You look at the universe, say, "Nobody times nothing equals everything." The other possibility is somebody times something out of nothing equals everything, and that makes sense. You see, cosmology is the argument from cause and effect – *kosmos*, the world – the effect, the universe. We look at it, and we say somebody made it. And as we define the world, we learn more about the one who made it.

For example: The cause of perpetual motion must be powerful. The cause of complexity must be omniscient. The cause of consciousness must be personal. The cause of feeling must be emotional. The cause of will must be volitional. The cause of ethical values must be moral. The cause of religious values must be spiritual. The cause of beauty must himself be aesthetic. The cause of

righteousness must be holy. The cause of justice must be just. The cause of love must be loving. The cause of life must be living. All you need to do is look at what we have in the world, and look at it carefully, and you'll see that there must be a God who is infinite, eternal, omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient, personal, emotional, volitional, moral, spiritual, aesthetic, holy, just, loving, and living. It's all there. And you pick up the Bible, and the Bible substantiates every bit of that. God is.

You say, "Well, boy, for a man to believe that God is not, he'd have to be pretty – pretty ignorant." No, the Bible says it clearly in Psalm 14:1, Psalm 53:1, "The fool has said in his heart" – what – "there is no God." That's a foolish statement.

But not only am I convinced that God is – because I have no other way to explain anything – but I'm convinced that God is because I need Him so badly. You know, it's like the atheist who finally wound up in a terrible position – he began to call out to God, and somebody said to him, "What are you doing calling on God?" He said, "Well, if there isn't a God, there ought to be one, for times like this." Well, I feel like that, too, don't you? If there isn't a God, there ought to be one. We're in a mess. You know, one of the most convincing things in my mind that God exists is because of my tremendous desire to know that He exists, because I look at people who deny that He exists, and I see the kind of life they live. You know, to study history and catalog all the well-known philosophical atheists, and then to watch how their lives wound down to the end, is one of the most interesting things you'll ever study. Those were the most bleak, hopeless, fearful men that you could ever read about.

Let me give you an illustration. Voltaire, he said this at the end of his life: "Strike out a few sages" – or wise men – "and the crowd of human beings is nothing but a horrible assemblage of unfortunate criminals and the globe contains nothing but corpses. I tremble to have to complain once more of the being of beings, and casting an eye over this terrible picture, I wish I had never been born." Renan said, "We are living on the perfume of an empty vase." H.G. Wells, another atheist, said: "There is no way out, or around, or through; it is the end." Robert Ingersoll said, "Life is a narrow veil between the cold and barren peaks of two eternities. We strive in vain to look beyond the heights. We cry aloud, and the only answer is the echo of our own wailing cry." Mark Twain said this: "A myriad of men are born, they labor and sweat and struggle for bread. They squabble and scold and fight. They scramble for little mean advantages over each other. Age creeps upon them. Infirmities follow. Shames and humiliations bring down their prides and their vanities. Those they love are taken from them, and the joy of life has turned to aching grief. The burden of pain and care and misery grows heavier year by year. At length, ambition is dead. Pride is dead. Vanity is dead. Longing for release is in their place. It comes at last – death, the only unpoisoned gift earth ever had for them. And they vanish from a world where they were of no consequence, where they achieved nothing, where they were a mistake and a failure and a foolishness, where they have left no sign that they have existed; a world which will lament them a day and forget them forever. And then another myriad takes their place, and copies all they did, and goes along the same profitless road, and vanishes as they vanished, to make room for another, and another, and millions of myriads to follow the same arid path through the same desert

and accomplish what the first myriad and all the myriads that came after it accomplished – nothing." End quote.

Bertrand Russell: "That man is the product of causes which had no prevision of the end they were achieving; that his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and beliefs are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms; that no fire, no heroism, no intensity of thought and feeling can preserve an individual life beyond the grave; that all the labors of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noonday brightness of human genius are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system; and that the whole temple of man's achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the debris of a universe in ruins. All these things, if not quite beyond dispute, are yet so nearly certain that no philosophy which rejects them can hope to stand." Pretty bleak life, isn't it?

All the evidence says God is, and any desperate man would certainly seek to know the truth if he knew that if he didn't know God, he'd end up like this. The consequences of faith in God are bright. The psalmist said: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil for" – what – "Thou art with me." T.B. Larimore, in his last days, wrote this: "My faith has never been stronger. My hope has never been brighter. My head has never been clearer. My heart has never been calmer. My life has never been purer. I love all; I hate none. My love for some lifts my soul into the realm of the sublime. I am willing to die today. I am willing to live a thousand years to tell the old, old story of Jesus and His love. My friends are dearer to me. Association with them is sweeter to me. My sympathy for suffering souls is stronger. My love for all the pure, the true, the beautiful, the good, and the sublime, from the bud, the blossom, the babe, up to Him from whom all blessings flow, is truer, tenderer, sweeter than ever before. I sleep soundly, dream sweetly, and rejoice evermore." Well, I don't know how you want to go out, but that's the way I want to go. So I say in Christianity we accept one big miracle – God – and everything makes sense. You deny that one big miracle, and nothing makes sense. God is.

Let's look at our second point. Who is He? He is, but who is He? Who is this God? Oh, we got a little hint a minute ago; let's kind of expand it for just a brief minute. You'll notice there's three little points in that part of your outline; I want to add a general point under which those three are categories. Who is He? First of all just this, He is a person. God is a person. God is not a floating cosmic battery cell. Einstein said, "Yes, we know there is a cosmic force in the universe, but he is unknowable." Einstein was wrong. God, we believe, is a person. And one of the reasons we believe that is because personality must come from personality. And we are persons, and we have all of those personal things that make up personhood, and they must have come from a source that is equally personal. We know God is personal from the Bible, because it says He is a person, because it uses personal titles to describe Him. He is given personal names. He is called, for example, a Father. He is called a Shepherd. He is called many things; a friend, a counselor. The terms that are used to identify God are identifying Him as a person. Not only that, personal pronouns are used. The Hebrew and the Greek always refers to God as He, never it. God is a person. He is a person because He thinks, and acts,

and feels, and speaks. He communicates. That is a characteristic of personhood. All the evidence of Scripture indicates that He is a person, and all the evidence of creation and our personhood indicates that we came from such a person.

Now, how do we define His person? We define it in those three terms. Number one: He is spirit. God is a spirit. “God is not a man,” it says in the Old Testament. “God is not a man,” Numbers 23:19. God is a spirit. And in John 4:24, Jesus said: “God is a spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.” God is a spirit. “A spirit,” said Jesus in Luke 24:39, “has not flesh and bones.” God is not a body. You say, “But the Bible says, ‘His eyes go to and fro throughout the earth. His arm is not shortened that He cannot heal. His right arm is a mighty arm.’” Yes, but that’s what we call anthropomorphisms. You know what that is? Those are terms used to speak of God in the body of a man, as if God were a man. Why? Because if it said, “God looks around the earth with his glirp,” you don’t understand that, so there’s no sense in saying it. When you say, “If God hears,” you immediately assume an ear because that’s all you know. So you think of God in human terms. The Bible simply accommodates that. But don’t push it and make God a man, like some of the cults have done. You’ve got a lot of problems with that, ’cause you know that some places in the Bible, it talks about God’s feathers covering you. God is not a bird, either. God is not a man, God is a spirit.

He is spoken of, in terms of I Timothy 1:17, as being the invisible God. No man will ever see God. No man ever has seen God. In order for you to see God you’d have to be God, “and no man can see Me and live.” No man could ever ascend to the level of visually seeing God. Now, God represents Himself in the *shekhinah* glory of the Old Testament, in the light, in the fire. God represents Himself in the form of Jesus Christ in the world, and we see Christ. And Jesus said: “If you’ve seen Me, that’s as close as you’re going to get,” John l4. We’ll not see God because God can’t be seen, He’s invisible. He may choose to manifest Himself in some way, limiting His total person to some visible thing, and in so doing reveal Himself, but that is not the totality of God. God is spirit. I’m glad He’s spirit, because He’s omnipresent spirit as well. We’ll talk about that next week.

Now, God is spirit, number one. Number two, He is one. God is one. And there are not a lot of gods. Did you know that? There’s only one God; that’s all, just one. “Hear, O Israel” – Deuteronomy 6:4, great statement that the key to the – the key to everything, really, for a Jew – “the Lord our God is one Lord.” That’s it. They were living in the midst of a polytheistic society, multiplicities of gods, and they were saying, “There is only one God.” You say, “Yeah, but what about Jesus? He came along later and He claimed to be God; is He God number two? There are at least two.” No. Mark, chapter 12, I’ll show you something very interesting. I want to show you something about how Jesus saw Himself, in terms of the concept of one God. “And Jesus answered,” Mark 12:29, this is what He said: “The first of all the commandments is this,” and He reiterates it, “Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord, and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind, and all thy strength.” Now, listen to me: if Jesus was coming along, as some say, and was saying, “In addition to God-God there is Jesus-God. We are both God,” then He would never have said this:

“Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord.”

And then He followed it by saying: “Love Him with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind.” If Jesus was equally comparing Himself, and saying, “I am another God,” He would have had to say, “Split your allegiance between the two of us.” When He says, “Love God with everything,” He is saying He’s the only one there is at the same time He is claiming to be that very God. Do you see? Great statement of His own deity, and yet even saying that He is God, He is saying at the same time, “Though there are two persons, there is one God. And you can give your total allegiance to that one God.” That’s why He says, “All your heart, and mind, and strength, and everything,” because there’s only one God. There isn’t any competition. You don’t need to divide your allegiance. That’s the potency of the passage. God is one.

Over in I Corinthians, chapter 8, Paul was solving another one of the Corinthian problems, and they had a problem because they were living in a pagan society where there were a lot of gods. There were all idols everywhere. And the people would do this, they would offer offerings to their gods, and commonly they would offer food. You want to go down and worship whatever god you wanted, maybe you were a fan of Mars, or somebody like that, or Diana, Artemis. You’d go down, you’d take a little pile of food, and you’d go in there to your temple, and you’d plunk your little deal down in front of your god. Of course, nobody was home, but you didn’t know that, and you’d put your food there. Well, after you put your food there, it wouldn’t just stay there; the priests who operated the little place where you were would come out and take your food away, and they’d haul it out the back, and they had a little market and they were selling the food. Why not? Make a buck. People get to worship, we get to make a little profit, keep the thing going.

So they’d go right out the back and sell the stuff you’d brought. Well, what happened was, the Christians would go downtown, they’d be looking for a good bargain, they’d find a deal, and they’d buy the food. Well, it happened they were buying it out of the market coming out of the backside of the temple, so some of the Christians were getting very uptight about other Christians eating food offered to idols. And they’d go over for a little dinner, and they’d say, “Where’d you get the food?” “Well, we got it at the” – “Aw, I’m not eating that – that was offered to idols.” There were all kinds of problems going on in terms of their fellowship. So Paul is writing here to tell them what to do about this matter.

Verse 4, I Corinthians 8: “As concerning, therefore, the eating of those things which are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world.” Now, that’s his whole point. An idol isn’t anything, live it up. If it’s the best bargain in town, get it. Eat it up. It isn’t going to make a bit of difference. There’s nothing there anyway. An idol is nothing. Look at the end of verse 4, “And that there is no other God but one.” That’s it – just one. “And though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or earth, for there are gods many and lords many, to us there is but one God, the Father of whom are all things and we in Him.” Now listen to this, “And one Lord Jesus Christ.” You

say, “Well now, wait a minute. You’ve got one and one; that equals two.” No, listen: “There’s one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in Him, and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by Him.” Now, listen to me, people: how can all things be by God the Father, and all things be by the Lord Jesus, and we be by God, and we be by the Lord Jesus, unless They’re both the same? You see, another claim to the absolute deity of Jesus Christ without dividing God into two parts. God is one. God is one.

First Timothy 2:5 is the same thing. There’s one God, that’s all, one God, not a lot. Now you can simplify your religious life, folks, there’s only one God. You say, “Now, wait a minute, John; Psalm 82, I know the verse” – I know it, too. Psalm 82 says: “To the rulers of Israel, and you are gods.” And some people have said, “Oh,” because God said that. God said, “You are gods.” What does He mean? What does He mean, they are gods? Does He mean there are lots of gods? No. In Psalm 82, He is speaking to the judges of Israel, and He’s not speaking about their essence, but He’s speaking about their office. He’s saying, “You know, you guys who sit in judgment on Israel are sitting in the place of God.” You understand now what He means? “You are judging as if God were there. You are sitting in God’s place of authority, and you have perverted” – and in the very next verse He says He’s going to wipe them out. So it’s obvious that they’re not equal to Him as holy gods, or He wouldn’t be saying it. And then the next verse says: “Arise, O God, and do it.”

Three – and it’s fitting that this be number three – God has three persons. God is a spirit. God is one. God is three. Now people always say, “Well, you can’t prove the trinity.” Well, the simplest way to prove the trinity is just to read the Bible from the beginning to the end. You always come up with the same three persons operating. It’s a total thing. But just to show you some verses that are very interesting: Genesis I says, “In the beginning, God,” and the word for God is *Elohim*, and anytime there’s an *im*, I-M, ending on the end of a Hebrew word it’s a plural. It’s like S in English – dogs, cats, etc. It’s plural; *im* is plural. “In the beginning, Gods” – plural; and yet it’s a singular concept – God – who is seen in a plural way, so even the trinity is introduced at the very start. In Matthew chapter 3, Jesus is being baptized, and the Bible says that Jesus was being baptized, the Holy Spirit descended as a dove, the Father said, “This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.” Father, Son, Holy Spirit, all together, same scene, same passage. John 14, Jesus says: “I’m going to go, I’m going to talk to the Father, He’s going to send the Holy Spirit,” all three in the same passage, John 14:16, 17.

First Corinthians chapter 12, the Apostle Paul talks about spiritual gifts. He says, “There are different ways the Spirit works. There are different ministries the Lord uses. But it’s the same God.” Three verses, all three members of the trinity mentioned again. Have you read the end of II Corinthians 13:14, “The grace of God, the love of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen “? All three in the same verse; and I’m thinking, too, I Peter 1:2, “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience in sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.” All three in the same verse. That’s just a scattering of what’s in the Bible. God is one, yet He’s three. You say, “Well, how does that work together?” I don’t know. I

haven't got the faintest idea. And this whole message, as compared to the true reality of God, is like one pebble of sand compared to every piece in the universe. I can't figure God out. If you try to figure out the trinity, you'll find yourself under the bed saying the Greek alphabet. You can't figure that out. There's no way. Let it be. Just believe it.

God is one, yet He is three, and I don't mean in saying that He's three that that's like modalistic Monarchianism or Sabelianism, which was an old heresy that said God was really a quick-change artist. That God had a closet, and He'd just – you know – He'd come out and do His God thing – ta-da – and then He'd run back in and put on His – put on His Holy Spirit suit, and He'd run out and do that bit for a while, and then He'd run back in. That's really what they were saying. No. God is one, and yet He is three at the very same time. And people say, "Well, it's like an egg; the yolk, and the white and the shell." Oh, that doesn't make it to me, I can't compare God to an egg. Other people say it's like water, it's got – it can be ice, or liquid, or vapor – that doesn't make it, either. It's not like anything, people; it isn't like anything at all. Some people say it's like light, it can illuminate, or it can warm, and it can produce energy. God is just God, and there's not a light bulb in the world, or an egg in the world, or a chunk of water like Him. He's God, and He's three in one. I don't understand it. I believe it. And I'm glad I don't understand it. The day I understand God, I'll be equal to God, and when that happens, everybody's in a lot of trouble.

Who is He? He's a person, spirit, one and yet three, and last, I'm going to close with this, what's He like? I'm going to give you, when it's all over with, about ten of His attributes. I'm just going to give you one right now, and then we'll quit. What's He like? What is this God like? First of all, apart from us, just what is He like just by Himself? Number one – and this is the only one we're going to look at, and really important – He is unchangeable. Hang on to this – tremendous concept. God is unchangeable. In Psalm 102:26, he says: "The heavens are going to change, and You will change them, but You are the same." God never changes. In Malachi 3:6, He looks down at Jacob and He says: "Jacob, I ought to destroy you, but I'm not going to destroy you because I am the Lord, I change not. I keep My covenants." I am the Lord, I change not – Malachi 3:6. James says: "Every good and perfect gift cometh down from the Father of lights in whom is no variableness, not even a shadow of turning." Not even a hint that He would alter.

God doesn't change. Now, think about it. Change is either for the better or for the worse, right? Both are inconceivable with God. He couldn't get any better and wouldn't get any worse. There's nothing to change. Now, that sets Him apart from everything, because everything changes. The heavens change. You look up and you see the heavens, they move about, they alter their course, and yet they're rigid in their course. The Revelation tells us in Revelation 6 to 19 that someday, the Lord's going to tear the whole heavens down; like shaking an untimely fig tree, the stars are going to fall, and heaven's going to roll up like a scroll. The sun's going to go out, the moon will turn to blood, and everything's going to go haywire in the sky. The heavens are going to change, believe me.

Not only that, but the earth changes. I mean man changes it – he changes the face of it with his bulldozers, he changes the atmosphere of it with his pollution. It changes all the time, and someday, in Revelation 6 to 19 again, it says that God's going to move on the face of the earth, and change a lot of things very drastically. The seas are going to be polluted. The fresh water's going to be polluted. A great portion of the grass and the green things are going to die. Humans are going to die. It'll be terrible holocausts, a hundred pound weight hailstones falling. The face of the earth is going to be changed. It's been changed already once by the flood, be changed again. The elements will melt with fervent heat when the earth is consumed. The ungodly are going to change. They change all the time. Ungodly people just change, fluctuate. Their loyalties change. Their attitudes change. Someday their whole identity is going to change when they find themselves before a Holy God. And what they think is a happy way to live is going to turn out to be tragic as they spend an eternity without God.

You know, even the saints change, the best of us? We change, don't we? How does this sound? "John MacArthur, the same yesterday, today, and forever." Not very good, does it? I'm not the same yesterday, today, and forever. It's ludicrous. I change. There are times when my love for Christ burns and I obey. There are times when it smolders and I disobey. Aren't you like that? I change. Even the best of the saints change. David says: "The God of my rock, in Him will I trust," II Samuel 22:3, we say, "Oh wow, David." And then he says, "One day I shall perish at the hands of Saul." Hey now, wait a minute, David; either God is going to take care of you, or He isn't. "Well, I vacillate a little." Yeah, we know. We know. God is a great problem solver, when they're solved. Even the angels change. Do you know that Jude 6 says the angels "kept not their first estate?" People, every single thing in this whole created universe changes except God. God never changes, and neither does Jesus. That means He's God. Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever is one of the greatest statements of deity of Jesus Christ ever made in the Bible. There's only one thing in the universe that doesn't change - that's God.

What does that mean to the godly? And I'm going to just give you this stuff. What does it mean to me as a Christian that He doesn't change? I'll tell you what it means. It means comfort to me. Listen, if ever He loved me, He loves me forever. If ever He forgave me, He forgave me forever. If ever He saved me, He saved me forever. If ever He promised me anything, He promised it to me forever. "My God is not slack concerning His promise." Romans 11 says, "The callings of God are without repentance." God doesn't change His mind. Aren't you glad about that? And He may look at me and say, "MacArthur, I ought to really wipe you out, but I am the Lord, I change not." And it says in one of the most powerful portions of Scripture – and I don't know whether you're familiar with it, but I'm going to take the minute to just read you this thought. "If we believe not," 2 Timothy 2:13, "yet He abides faithful, He can't deny Himself."

Do you know what your salvation and security is based on? What's it based on? God's unchanging character; God's absolute nature. Jeremiah 31:3 says this: "I have loved you with an everlasting

love." If ever He loved you, He loved you forever. "The mountains shall be removed," said Isaiah, "but My loving-kindness shall not depart from thee, neither the covenant of My peace be removed." "My counsel shall stand," Isaiah 46:10 says. Isn't it paradoxical that in order for us to be rightly related to an unchanging God we have to undergo a drastic change? That's the only way, right? In order to be rightly related to an unchanging God we have to undergo a drastic change. Jesus said to Nicodemus, "You must be born all over again." You say, "Well, MacArthur, you have bypassed several scriptures. There's one there in Amos chapter 7. There's one there in Genesis 6:6. There's one there in Jonah 3:10. And they say, 'It repented the Lord that He did this.'" You're right. That's right. But it says in Numbers 23:19, "Ah, the Lord is not a man that He should repent." Now, how can it say the Lord doesn't repent, and then three times He did? Well, you have to understand the situation. And it's unfair to just lump that all together without seeing the situation.

God doesn't change – listen to this – God doesn't change. That's clear. He never changes. God never changes His will; however, within His will, He may will a change under certain circumstance. For example, God says to Nineveh, "You, Nineveh, are going to get wiped out." Why? Sinful city. Then God says, "Jonah, will you get over there?" And you remember what happened. He took a short ride on a long fish, but he finally got there. And when he got there, he preached, and the whole city repented, and God looked down and said, it says in the Bible, "God repented of what He would have done, and instead He blessed them." Did God really change His will? It wasn't God that changed, what was it? It was Nineveh that changed. God said, "You're going to be punished, Nineveh," and they were, the way they were going.

God looked at the antediluvian, the pre-Flood civilization, and He said, "I'm sorry I made you. You bring sorrow, because I'm going to have to wipe you all out." Why did He say that? God had made them for blessing, and man had turned around, violated God's principles, and God had to curse them. Listen, God never changed His will; His will was always the same. Reward good and punish evil, right? It just so happened that the object changed. You know, you can't blame the sun for melting the wax and hardening the clay. it has to do with the substance, not the sun. It's how a man stands before God that dictates what happens to him. And it may appear from a human view that God has changed – like riding your bike; you ever ride your bike against the wind? And you're going, and then it's a hard wind, and you're struggling along, and then all of a sudden, you get where you're going, turn around and *whooooo*, you know, it just brushes you along. And that's when you say, "Oh, the wind has changed." The wind didn't change at all, you did. God never changes. It's always been the same. God rewards the good and punishes the evil. It's all depending on how you set yourself in terms of the flow of His grace and His will.

So when the Bible says, "God repented," it doesn't mean that God said, "Oh, I think I made a mistake, I'll do it another way." It means God altered what He had already been required to do because of how they were behaving, and He turned to do what He was then free to do because of how they altered their behavior. But His will never changed; His will was always the same – punish evil, and reward

good. He doesn’t change. He never varies out of His course. And so God doesn’t change.

Christian, I don’t know how that hits you, but for me, that is exciting. I belong to Him, and He’s going to take care of me. Ii He ever promised me a promise, He promised it to me forever. If it says, “My God shall supply all your needs,” that doesn’t mean that He ran out of stuff in 1950, and now He’s got problems. That’s good for everybody, for all time. I’m secure in that, aren’t you?

What does it mean to an unbeliever? This: if God said, “A soul that sins will die,” He meant it. If God said, “The wages of sin is death,” He meant it. If God said, “There is an eternal hell,” He meant it. And if that’s what He says now, that’s what He said in the past, that’s exactly what’s going to come to pass. The Bible says in Psalm 119:89, “Forever,” how long? “Forever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in heaven, forever.” God never changes. For some of us that’s ecstatic joy. For others of us it ought to be fear. Let’s pray. Father, thank You this morning for giving us the time to share together. Thank You for revealing Yourself through Your Word to be the God that You are. Father, thank You for being God of mercy. Help us who are Christians, who are in the flow of Your grace and will, who have Your wind at our backs, to realize the security, and refuge, and blessing that is ours forever, and to live lives of gratitude. And, Father, I pray for those who are going against the wind, who are smashing themselves into Your will and Your grace. O Father, I pray that You’ll be able to change toward them because they have changed toward You. That they may become new creatures in Christ, and thus be rightly related to You.

While your heads are bowed, just in a closing thought, I would say this: if some of you are here this morning and you’ve never committed yourself to Christ, you’ve never opened your heart to Him, it’s my prayer this morning that you would put yourself in a position to be rightly related to the unchanging God, and to be the benefactor of all that He has to give. You say, “How do you do that, John?” The Bible says, “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation. Old things have passed away, all things become new.” It is when you put your faith in Christ and respond to Him as Lord and Savior that you’re rightly related to God, and that His secure arms are set about you for eternity. Our prayer is that you’d do that this morning, right in your heart. For those of you who already know Christ, that this might be a time when you can be thankful to God for all that He is and promises forever to be to you. And, Father, thank You for our fellowship this morning, for every precious life here, and divine presence; we ask Your attention given to that life, by Your Holy Spirit, to bring about what needs to be brought about to rightly relate them to You, that they truly may receive with fullness all of the blessings of Your unchanging promise. We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

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