

Study 1. Basic Facts about God

READ: Acts 17: 16-34



KEY VERSE: 1 Thessalonians 1: 9
“You turned to God from idols
to serve the living and true God.”

In the early days of Christianity, God chose a man called Paul for an important task. He was God’s messenger to all kinds of people from different countries and varied cultures. In his travels, he often met people who knew very little about God, and people who had all sorts of wrong ideas about Him. At times like that, Paul had to start right at the beginning. He had to tell them the basic facts about the one true God.

Paul had arrived in Athens, which at one time had been a great centre of learning. Philosophers still gathered in the market place to discuss the latest beliefs and ideas. Paul, who was always ready for a discussion about spiritual matters, spent time with these men. They were trying, in their own way, to make sense of life, death, good and evil. Some of these were called Epicureans; they looked for a way of life which would give them the feeling of peace and happiness. Others were called Stoics; they believed that accepting whatever fate directed for your life, was the answer. Neither could offer any hope for eternity (that is, the life to come) and Paul was genuinely distressed by what he saw. These people, like so many others, were **“without hope and without God in the world”**. (Ephesians 2: 12)



Paul began to get a reputation. Some folks said, “He is all talk, telling us we should believe in some foreign gods”. But others who heard him had a genuine interest and brought him to a special meeting place. There, he could tell them clearly and without interruption, just what this new belief was all about.



Like all good teachers and preachers, Paul began by referring to something with which his listeners were familiar and could see at any time in their city - an altar with the inscription **‘TO THE UNKNOWN GOD’** - He used this as the starting point in his declaration of the one true God.

Paul’s great argument included the following facts:-

- a. He is the God of the universe**, the One who made the world and everything that is known to us. (v. 24)
- b. He is the God of all mankind**, the One who gives life and sustains it. (v. 25)
- c. He is the God of all nations**, the One who gives authority and boundaries to the nations on earth. (v. 26)
- d. He is the Judge of all men**, the One who has chosen the day when the whole world will be judged in righteousness. Therefore He is the One who now has the right to command everyone to repent. (vs. 30 & 31)

In Athens, Paul had been distressed to see the large number of idols - lifeless gods of gold, silver and stone. He appealed to the Athenians’ intelligence.

“It’s time now to turn away from these worthless, man-made things,” he said. “The Man who will judge the world could come at any time, for God has raised Him from the dead as proof of His divine appointment.” The response was not encouraging, because only a few believed.

However, you will notice in **verse 27** that this great God is near to all who will truly seek after Him. We need to ask ourselves, “How well do I know Him?”

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Study 1. Basic Facts about God

1 THERE IS A WORD MISSING FROM EACH OF THESE SENTENCES.

- i) The woman who believed was called _____ .
- ii) God does not live in _____ .
- iii) God is the Lord of Heaven and _____ .
- iv) The Athenians thought that Paul's ideas were _____ .
- v) "God commands all people everywhere to _____ ."
- vi) Epicureans and Stoics were known as _____ .
- vii) The man who believed was called _____ .

7

2 DESCRIBE HOW PAUL FELT WHEN HE ARRIVED IN THIS CITY.

2

3 WHERE DID PAUL STAND TO PRESENT HIS CASE FOR CHRISTIANITY?

1

4 IN WHAT WAYS DOES THE GOD ABOUT WHOM PAUL SPOKE, DIFFER FROM THE GODS WHICH THE ATHENIANS WORSHIPPED?

4

5 A) SUGGEST SOME THINGS WHICH MAY BE VIEWED AS IDOLS IN THE MODERN WORLD.

4

B) WHY DO YOU THINK IT IS IMPORTANT TO TURN FROM THESE WORTHLESS THINGS TO THE LIVING GOD?

4

6 THERE WERE THREE SORTS OF RESPONSES TO PAUL'S PREACHING AT ATHENS. WHAT WERE THEY?

- i) _____
- ii) _____
- iii) _____

3

25

Total marks for this study

This study sheet belongs to:

Study 2. God of the Universe

READ: Genesis 1: 1-31



KEY VERSE: Genesis 1: 1
“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

In recent centuries, scientists have discovered an immense amount about our universe. Nothing has been too big and nothing too small for their research and investigation. They have discovered how all kinds of things work. Atoms and animals, plants and planets, volcanoes and viruses have all been examined. No time span has been too long as scientists have looked into growth and development, mutation and emergence; no area of life has been safe from experiment or analysis!

But how did it all begin? When did it all begin? Was there really a ‘big bang’?

1) “In the beginning God . . .”

The book of Genesis makes it quite clear that there **was** a beginning and also **who** was there! In fact, the word ‘Genesis’ means ‘the beginning’ and it tells us about the beginning of everything - except God! Why? Because He has no beginning! God is without beginning, eternal in His being.
(Psalm 90: 2)

2) “In the beginning God created . . .”

Scientists can investigate and speculate and give us their theories, but only the Bible tells us with absolute certainty how the earth came into being. From the first chapter of Genesis we learn that it was God who created everything - by His Word. **(Psalm 33: 6 & 9)** It was the work of six days. From start to finish we read simply, **“God said . . . God made . . . God created . . . God blessed . . .”** The Bible does not discourage an interest in science. It teaches us that the **source** of all things is God, which is exactly what Paul told the Athenians, **“God made the world and everything in it”**. **(Acts 17: 24)**

3) “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

Although God created everything, **Genesis 1** concentrates on our world - Planet Earth. The sun, moon and stars are mentioned but only in connection with their effect on the earth. Our world is one of the planets going around a smallish sun in an incredibly vast universe. But God was responsible for creating it and all who live in it and, more than that, God cares for His creation.
(Isaiah 40: 28-31)

The first thing God made was light - the opposite of darkness and gloom. Then He separated His creation into distinct regions - land, sea, air; for God is a God of revelation and order, not ignorance and confusion. What else can we learn about Him? He is the giver of life - plant, animal and human - as Paul explained, **“He gives to all, life, breath and all things”**. **(Acts 17: 25)**

4) “God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good.” (Genesis 1: 31)

At each stage of His work and when He had finished, God declared His satisfaction with what He had made. He never had to say, “I made a mistake there. Perhaps I had better try that again.” The Lord of Heaven and earth is the God of absolute power and wisdom. **(Revelation 4: 11)**



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Study 2. God of the Universe

1 GENESIS 1 IS FULL OF DESCRIPTIONS OF GOD'S ACTIVITY. BESIDE EACH ACTION BELOW, PUT THE NUMBER OF ONE VERSE WHERE IT IS MENTIONED.

"God created" Verse _____
 "God saw" Verse _____
 "God blessed" Verse _____

"God said" Verse _____
 "God made" Verse _____

5

2 READ PSALM 33: 6-8. AS WE SEE GOD'S IMMENSE POWER IN CREATION, WHAT ATTITUDE SHOULD WE SHOW TOWARDS OUR CREATOR?

3

3 ISAIAH 40: 28-31 TELLS US THAT GOD CARES FOR HIS CREATION.

A) HOW IS GOD DESCRIBED IN THESE VERSES?

B) IN COMPARISON WITH GOD WE ARE WEAK. HOW CAN GOD'S STRENGTH BECOME REAL TO US, IN OUR LIVES TODAY?

6

4 COMPLETE THE PHRASE FROM GENESIS 1: 22 & 28 WHICH SHOWS GOD'S LOVE FOR THE CREATURES HE HAD MADE:

"And God _____ them"

1

5 SUMMARIZE, IN THE BOXES, WHAT GOD MADE ON EACH OF THE SIX DAYS OF CREATION.

DAY 1	<input type="text"/>	DAY 4	<input type="text"/>
DAY 2	<input type="text"/>	DAY 5	<input type="text"/>
DAY 3	<input type="text"/>	DAY 6	<input type="text"/>

6

6 THIS CHAPTER, LIKE EVERY OTHER PART OF THE BIBLE, CALLS FOR OUR FAITH IN WHAT GOD HAS SAID. READ HEBREWS 11: 3 & 6, AND WRITE OUT BOTH VERSES.

4

25

Total marks for this study

This study sheet belongs to:

Study 3. Lord of Heaven and Earth

READ: Psalm 104: 1-35



KEY VERSE: Psalm 147: 15
“He sends out His command to the earth.”



“While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.”

This, according to **Genesis 8: 22**, is what God, the Lord of

Heaven and earth, has determined. He has made our world a place of order and regularity - day and night, summer and winter - all so necessary for the continuance of the human race. When night comes, no one doubts that the sun will rise next morning. When the sun's rays begin to warm the earth in spring, we know that the trees and animals will respond with fresh life and energy.

The man who wrote **Psalm 104** was certainly in touch with nature and its Creator. He describes God in a graphic and vivid way. He pictures the Lord, clothed in the light He has created, riding on the clouds; wind and fire are His servants and the heavens are His home. No wonder he speaks of the splendour and majesty of his God and in the following verses he expands on the Lord's creative powers. God, in His wisdom, has created a rich and varied world. (**v. 24**)

Follow these verses through and think about our wonderful world:-

- He gave it a firm foundation. (**v. 5**)
- He sets limits for the seas. (**vs. 6-9**)
- He provides for all His creation. (**vs. 10-18**)
- He regulates days and the seasons. (**vs. 19-23**)
- He supplies abundantly for all. (**vs. 24-28**)
- He is in control of life and death. (**vs. 29-30**)

We must remember, however, that God is able to alter the course of nature, when He has special reasons for doing so. Here are two examples:-

- “The sun stood still in the midst of heaven,”** to allow Joshua's army to defeat the Amorites. (**Joshua 10: 13 & 14**)
- “The sun was darkened,”** for three hours when the Son of God was dying for our sins. (**Luke 23: 44 & 45**)

Because everything in creation is generally so regular, some people have the idea that nature is like an automatic machine or a programmed computer. Even if they concede that God did make it all, they think He has nothing to do with it now - it just runs by itself! People are often perplexed by natural disasters such as earthquakes and droughts. If God is in control, why, they ask, does He allow these things to happen?

To help our understanding of these problems you may recall from Study 1 what Paul said to the men of Athens. Speaking to them about God, he said, **“In Him we live and move and have our being”.** (**Acts 17: 28**) Note carefully that Paul speaks in the present tense (**“live”, “move”, “have”**) to emphasize that we are completely dependent on Him for everything. Since this is the case with us, we can be sure that ALL of God's creation must be supported and upheld by Him, today and every day, as **Psalm 104** has taught us.



Natural disasters remind us that because of Adam's sin and our own turning away from a loving God, the perfect creation is spoiled. It is now under the curse of God. (**Genesis 3: 17**) Human greed and carelessness may also be partly responsible for many of the world's problems today. We know, however, that when the Lord Jesus Christ returns to the earth to reign, God's wonderful creation will be brought into perfect harmony with its Creator's will. (**Isaiah 35: 1 & 2 and 65: 25**)

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Study 3. Lord of Heaven and Earth

1 A. GIVE TWO EXAMPLES OF THE REGULAR ORDER OF EVENTS WHICH GOD, AS CREATOR, HAS ESTABLISHED IN THE EARTH.

B. FOR HOW LONG WILL THIS REGULARITY LAST, ACCORDING TO GOD'S PROMISE?

4

2 "THE GREAT CREATOR CARES FOR HIS CREATURES." SELECT A VERSE FROM THE BIBLE READING WHICH PROVES THIS STATEMENT, AND WRITE IT OUT.

2

3 READ CAREFULLY LUKE 23: 44 & 45, ABOUT THE DARKNESS AT THE TIME OF JESUS' CRUCIFIXION, THEN ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS:-

A. BETWEEN WHAT HOURS DID THE DARKNESS CONTINUE? _____

B. WHAT WAS BEING ACCOMPLISHED DURING THIS EXCEPTIONAL EVENT?

C. WHAT OTHER MIRACULOUS EVENT TOOK PLACE AT THE SAME TIME?

6

4 HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER A PERSON WHO SAYS, "MODERN MAN IS SO CLEVER THAT HE HAS NO NEED OF GOD"?

5

5 ACCORDING TO GENESIS 3: 17-19 WHAT EFFECTS DID ADAM'S SIN HAVE ON THE EARTH?

3

6 GIVE TWO EXAMPLES OF HOW OUR GREEDINESS AND CARELESSNESS MAY ADD TO MANKIND'S PROBLEMS ON THE EARTH TODAY.

2

7 READ 1 PETER 4: 19, AND WRITE A SENTENCE TO EXPLAIN WHAT IS MEANT BY SPEAKING OF GOD AS "A FAITHFUL CREATOR".

3

25

Total marks
for this study

This study sheet belongs to:

Study 4. Are we accountable to God?

READ: Daniel 4: 4 & 5, and 10-37



KEY VERSE: Romans 14: 12
“So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.”

God created everything and God still controls everything! This is not too hard to believe, if we think only of nature. For example, if we use powerful telescopes, we can track the movements of stars and planets in their set orbits, just as God has determined. Indeed, without scientific instruments, we can observe how seedtime and harvest recur, without fail, as God has promised! Sun and moon obey their Maker, but with the human race, it is a different story! We all have disobeyed Him, time and time again. We may wonder if, perhaps, God has lost control as far as mankind is concerned. Does He stand by, helplessly, while we spoil His world?

A PROUD KING (Vs. 22 & 27)

The story of Nebuchadnezzar sheds some light on this problem. He was a very powerful king who had been successful in war, and had established himself as the most despotic ruler on earth. (See Daniel 5: 18 & 19)

He reckoned that he could do whatever he wished - even with people's lives - and was answerable to no one! Thus, he became a very arrogant and boastful man, full of his own importance.

A BAD DREAM (Vs. 10-17)

God did not allow him to go unchecked! The remarkable dream, about a magnificent tree being cut down in its prime, was God's way of warning him of the consequences of his pride. The tree represented him! If he did not alter his self-centred way of life, God's judgment would overtake him!

GOOD ADVICE (Vs. 19-27)

In interpreting the dream, Daniel (or Belteshazzar, as Nebuchadnezzar called him) did not miss the opportunity to tell the king that he needed to

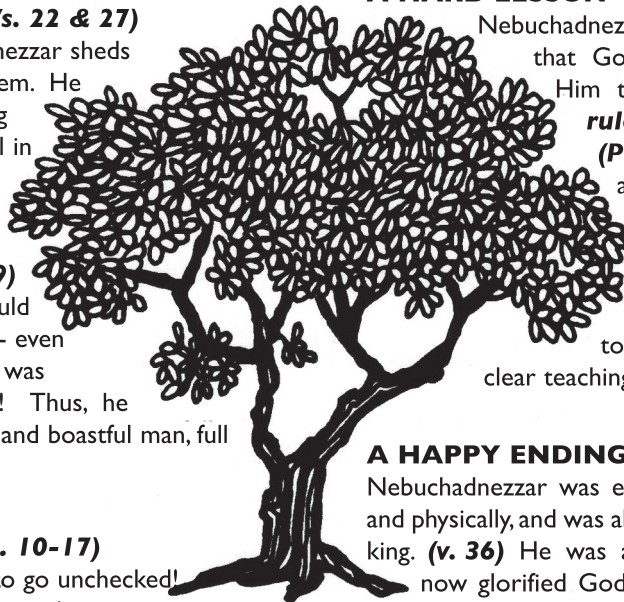
change his ways. (v. 27) The right course for Nebuchadnezzar, and, indeed, for us all is to humble ourselves before God, repent of our sins, and seek His forgiveness. (Acts 17: 30 and James 4: 10)

A GREAT FALL (Vs. 28-33)

For a whole year, God's warning went unheeded. (v. 29) Nebuchadnezzar remained as conceited and as self-important as ever! But **“those who walk in pride He (God) is able to abase”** (v. 37), and so it happened that God struck him down. The great, boastful Nebuchadnezzar became mentally deranged, was rejected by society, and was reduced to living like an animal in a field! It was a most unusual stroke of God's judgment, and it is recorded in the Bible to teach us that even the most powerful people on earth are answerable to God for how they live.

A HARD LESSON

Nebuchadnezzar learned the hard way that God is supreme. It is only by Him that **“kings reign and rulers decree justice”**. (Proverbs 8: 15) All are accountable to Him, and we disregard His laws only at tremendous cost to ourselves! Whatever our situation in life, we do well to regulate our lives by the clear teachings of God's Word, the Bible.



A HAPPY ENDING (Vs. 34-37)

Nebuchadnezzar was eventually restored, mentally and physically, and was able to resume his position as king. (v. 36) He was a changed man, in that he now glorified God and gave Him His rightful place in his life. As a result of what had happened to him, he acknowledged that God, NOT Nebuchadnezzar, is supreme! The once proud and arrogant king at last gave praise and honour to **“the King of Heaven”!** (v. 37)

God has many ways of confronting us with the fact that we are accountable to Him for what we say and do. The best course in life is to be humble before Him, and to put our personal faith in the Saviour whom He has provided for us.

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Study 4. Are we accountable to God?

**1 THE BEGINNING OF THE STUDY MAKES THE POINT THAT WE ALL HAVE DISOBEYED GOD.
A. GIVE TWO DEFINITE EXAMPLES OF HOW A YOUNG PERSON TODAY MIGHT DO SO.**

B. USING COLOSSIANS 3: 5 & 6 TO HELP YOU, EXPLAIN IN YOUR OWN WORDS WHAT THE RESULT OF PERSISTENT DISOBEDIENCE AGAINST GOD WILL BE.

4

2 NEBUCHADNEZZAR WAS A 'DESPOT' OR AN 'AUTOCRAT'. THIS MEANS THAT HE ASSUMED TOTAL AND ABSOLUTE AUTHORITY OVER PEOPLE'S LIVES. USE DANIEL 5: 18 & 19 TO SHOW FOUR WAYS IN WHICH HE USED HIS POWER.

1. _____ 3. _____

2. _____ 4. _____

2

3 FIVE TIMES IN THE BIBLE READING GOD IS GIVEN THE TITLE "THE MOST HIGH" OR "THE SUPREME GOD", REMINDING US THAT HE IS ABOVE ALL AND IS THE ONE TO WHOM WE ARE ACCOUNTABLE. WRITE OUT THE FIVE VERSE NUMBERS WHERE THIS TITLE OCCURS:

5

4 A. WRITE A SENTENCE TO DESCRIBE WHAT NEBUCHADNEZZAR SAW IN HIS DREAM.

B. WHOM DID THE TREE REPRESENT? _____

C. WHAT DID THE CUTTING DOWN OF THE TREE REPRESENT? _____

3

5 A. IN WHAT WAYS DID GOD'S JUDGMENT COME UPON NEBUCHADNEZZAR? _____

B. WHAT COULD HE HAVE DONE TO AVOID GOD'S PUNISHMENT OVERTAKING HIM?

C. WHAT HAS GOD DONE IN ORDER THAT WE MAY NOT SUFFER THE PENALTY OF OUR DISOBEDIENCE? _____

6

6 READ PROVERBS 16: 18. IN WHAT WAY DOES THE EXPERIENCE OF NEBUCHADNEZZAR ILLUSTRATE THIS VERSE? _____

2

7 EXPLAIN AS CLEARLY AS POSSIBLE, WHAT IT MEANS TO BE ACCOUNTABLE TO GOD.

3

Return your study sheets to:

or the PBS Centre below

25

Total marks for this study