

# The Attributes and Works of God

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MINISTRIES

## The Attributes of God

God's attributes include His self-existence, immutability (unchanging), eternity, omnipresence (everywhere), omniscience (all-knowing), omnipotence (unlimited), and sovereignty (all-ruling power).<sup>i</sup> God's attributes are *one* with and in complete unity with Him. While God is limitless, He has chosen to restrain His will, giving humanity a degree of "free will." This is the great mystery and the seeming paradox of God's absolute sovereignty versus His limited will.

God's Divine attributes parallel His human qualities and are therefore associated with the dispersion of Godly light to all mankind, which He made a little lower than the angels.<sup>ii</sup> Hence, we read, even regarding the son of man, *"What is man that You are mindful of him, Or the son of man that You take care of him? You have made him a little lower than the angels; You have crowned him with glory and honor, And set him over the works of Your hands. You have put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone"* (Hebrews 2:6-9, NKJV).<sup>iii</sup>

In Hebrew, the sages call the attributes of God "*Sefirot*" and are said to represent the fingers of God in a metaphorical sense. An attribute is a quality or characteristic ascribed to God. For example, God is kind, associated with the attribute of Kindness (called *Sefira Chesed* in Hebrew).<sup>iv</sup> All the fingers together make up the hand, and the hand without the fingers is incomplete.

There are several theories offered as to the meaning of the word *Sefira*. One suggests it is correlated with the Hebrew root of the word "*sefor*," which means number. *Sefor* is also closely related to the word *sefer*, which means "book." Another possible relationship is to the Hebrew word "*Sapir*," which implies "sapphire" or "gem." For now, this word remains a mystery.

The sages view these ten attributes as more than abstracts; they see them as spiritual emanations of God's infinite light—called the *Ein Sof*. For example, when God said, *"Let there be light; and there was light"* (Genesis 1:3), God did not just create light; instead, the essence of God's light was poured into the creation. God *is* light, and He has no darkness or deception in Him.

God does not change and is forever faithful, never breaking His covenant promises. We read: “Kings shall see and arise, Princes also shall worship, Because of the LORD who is faithful, The Holy One of Israel” (Isaiah 49:7). God is loving and merciful, and He cares for the oppressed and downtrodden, as we read, “A father of the fatherless, a defender of widows, Is God in His holy habitation” (Psalm 68:5).

The rabbis tell us that God’s emanating light traveled downward from His highest attribute through nine others. God’s ten attributes, in order of their highest to lowest, are Crown (*Keter*), Wisdom (*Chachmah*), Understanding (*Vinah*), Kindness (*Chesed*), Courage (*Gevurah*), Glory (*Tiferet*), Eternity (*Netzach*), Beauty (*Hod*), Foundation (*Yisod*), and lastly, Kingdom (*Malchut*).

These ten attributes are similar, but also different than the seven Spirits of God mentioned in Isaiah. These seven are the Spirit of the Lord (*Yehova*), the Spirit of wisdom (*Chachmah*), the Spirit of understanding and insight (*Vinah*), the Spirit of counsel (*Etzah*), the Spirit of might and valor (*Gevurah*), the Spirit of knowledge (*Da’at*), and the Spirit of fear, devotion, and reverence for the Lord (*Yir’at Yehova*).<sup>v</sup> Some scholars compare these seven Spirits of the Lord to those mentioned in Revelation. However, they are not spelled out in Greek as in Hebrew (see table).<sup>vi</sup>

Theological Attributes	Rabbinic Attributes	Seven Spirits of God
1. Sovereignty (all-ruling power) 2. Omnipotence (unlimited) 3. Immutability (unchanging)	Crown ( <i>Keter</i> )	
Omniscience (all-knowing)	Wisdom ( <i>Chachmah</i> )	Spirit of wisdom ( <i>Chachmah</i> )
Omniscience (all-knowing)	Understanding ( <i>Vinah</i> )	Spirit of Understanding and Insight ( <i>Vinah</i> )
Sovereignty (all-ruling power)	Kindness ( <i>Chesed</i> )	
1. Sovereignty (all-ruling power) 2. Omnipotence (unlimited)	Courage ( <i>Gevurah</i> )	Spirit of Might and Valor ( <i>Gevurah</i> )
Self-existence	Glory ( <i>Tiferet</i> )	
1. Eternality 2. Omnipresence (everywhere) 3. Immutability (unchanging)	Eternity ( <i>Netzach</i> )	
Self-existence	Beauty ( <i>Hod</i> )	
1. Immutability (unchanging) 2. Sovereignty (all-ruling power)	Foundation ( <i>Yisod</i> )	
1. Sovereignty (all-ruling power) 2. Eternality 3. Immutability (unchanging)	Kingdom ( <i>Malchut</i> )	
Self-existence		Spirit of the Lord ( <i>Yehova</i> )
1. Sovereignty (all-ruling power) 2. Immutability (unchanging)		Spirit of Counsel ( <i>Etzah</i> )
Omniscience (all-knowing)		Spirit of Knowledge ( <i>Da’at</i> )
Sovereignty (all-ruling power)		Spirit of Fear, Devotion, and Reverence for the Lord ( <i>Yir’at Yehova</i> )

While God's power is demonstrated within the creation and His sovereign rule over it, God's Divine power is further revealed in the resurrection of Jesus. This mystery is not yet complete, as we read, *"But in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished, as He declared to His servants the prophets"* (Revelation 10:7).

Expounding on the wisdom of the rabbis, Jesus is the ultimate emanation of God's infinite light and radiance through which all creation came into existence. As it is written: *"All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men"* (John 1:3-4); *"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth"* (John 1:14). Even Jesus said, *"He who has seen Me has seen the Father"* (John 14:9).

Therefore, we can allegorically associate Jesus with God's hand and the ten fingers as His attributes. The Apostle John declared: *"LORD, WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR REPORT? AND TO WHOM HAS THE ARM OF THE LORD BEEN REVEALED?"* (John 12:38).<sup>vii</sup> And the Psalmist said, *"Nor did their own arm save them; But it was Your right hand, Your arm, and the light of Your countenance"* (Psalm 44:30).

Thus, we affirm: Jesus is King of all creation and wears His crown of authority (*Keter*), He is all-understanding and has all wisdom (*Chachmah and Binah*), He has given us His immeasurable kindness (*Chesed*), Jesus is full of courage (*Gevurah*), He is the Glory of God (*Tiferet*), Jesus holds the keys to eternity in His hand (*Netzah*), Jesus is full of beauty (*Hod*), He is the foundation of all that exists (*Yisod*), and lastly, Jesus will establish His everlasting Kingdom (*Malchut*). Jesus also holds the seven Spirits of the Lord and the seven stars of His church.

As the church is promised the same resurrection as Jesus and transformation into His perfect image, we now also are the hands and fingers of God; we are His attributes displayed to the whole of creation. God has promised us His crown of glory, beauty, wisdom and understanding, courage, eternal life, and His Kingdom.<sup>viii</sup> He has also sealed and given us a deposit and guarantee of the Holy Spirit.<sup>ix</sup> We have been given the mind of Christ, His wisdom, knowledge, understanding, and insight, the Spirit of counsel and discernment, might and valor, and the Spirit of fear, devotion, and reverence for the Lord.

God is sovereign over all creation, including humanity, the angels and demons, principalities and powers, spirits, and even Satan himself.<sup>x</sup> He remains seated on His throne of governance, and everything results from the will of God, whether He causes or allows it.<sup>xi</sup> We read:

*"To whom then will you liken Me, Or to whom shall I be equal? says the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high, And see who has created these things, Who brings out their host by number; He calls them all by name, By the greatness of His might And the strength of His power; Not one is missing. Why do you say, O Jacob, And speak, O Israel: My way is hidden from the LORD, And my just claim is passed over by my God? Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the LORD, The Creator of the ends of the earth, Neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable"* (Isaiah 40:25-28).

God is kind, loving, and merciful, and He cares for the oppressed and downtrodden. It is written: *"A father of the fatherless, a defender of widows, Is God in His holy habitation" (Psalm 68:5)*. Unfortunately, some have misconstrued God's character, incorrectly presuming, for example, that God is both good and evil because He allows for evil to exist. Others have misinterpreted God's sovereignty, falsely believing that God is either limited or has abandoned the creation to man's absolute rule; both are wrong.

While God is sovereign, He is not arbitrary. God has allowed humanity and the angels a degree of free will and self-rule because, without it, there can be no moral accountability and eternal judgment.<sup>xii</sup> Thus, while God is the supreme judge of all creation and remains sovereign over it, He does so without violating man's essential freedom. Neither does God's omniscience (all-knowing) election and predestination violate it.<sup>xiii</sup>

God's foreknowledge does not manipulate or override men's actions any more than afterknowledge. God knows from eternity what each man will do and what each person will decide concerning His Son. While God is not willing that any should perish, He also knows that many will not enter His Kingdom.<sup>xiv</sup> Jesus said, *"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it" (Matthew 7:13)*.

Dr. R. A. Torrey writes:

*"The actions of Judas and the rest were taken into God's plan, and thus made part of it. But it does not mean that these men were not perfectly free in their choice. They did not do as they did because God knew that they would do so, but the fact that they would do so was the basis upon which God knew it. Foreknowledge no more determines a man's actions than afterknowledge. Knowledge is determined by the fact, not the fact by the knowledge... God knows from all eternity what each man will do, whether he will yield to the Spirit and accept Christ, or whether he will resist the Spirit and refuse Christ."<sup>xv</sup>*

Several attributes of God are universally categorized as moral, including His holiness, righteousness, love, truth, and faithfulness. As applied to God, Holiness is separation, exaltation, and absolute perfection of character. Webster defines holiness as: "Dedicated to religious use; belonging to or coming from God; consecrated, sacred; spiritually perfect or pure; untainted by evil or sin; sinless, saintly."<sup>xvi</sup> The Hebrew word for holy is *Kadosh*, which means, "Ascribed to all those things which in any way pertain to God, or His worship; sacred; free from the defilement of vice, idolatry, and other impure and profane things."<sup>xvii</sup> The Greek word for holy is *hagios* and means, "Dedicated to God, holy, sacred; reserved for God and His service; pure, perfect, worthy of God, consecrated."<sup>xviii</sup>

Because human beings are sinful and separated from God's presence and holiness, God has chosen to *impute* and attribute His holiness to us, first to the nation of Israel and now to all who are in Christ Jesus. We are called "saints," meaning "holy ones."<sup>xix</sup> The Lord divided Israel from her surrounding nations and dedicated and consecrated them to Himself. He then separated the Levites and the sons of Aaron to serve and worship Him in His Temple.

Per God's commandments, Israel was to worship God alone and avoid every form of idolatry.<sup>xx</sup> The Lord declared, *"You shall not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do according to their works; but you shall utterly overthrow them and completely break down their sacred pillars"* (Exodus 23:24).

For the New Testament believer, we are also to separate ourselves from the old sinful nature and, as written at the Jerusalem council, to abstain from things polluted by idols, sexual immorality, anything strangled, and blood.<sup>xxi</sup> We are to live inward and outward lives that demonstrate purity to God, for we have been sanctified through the Word and the Holy Spirit, and it is the will of God to present us to Himself an unblemished and holy people.<sup>xxii</sup> Peter said, *"As He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, 'Be holy, for I am holy'"* (1 Peter 1:15-16).

While we are called to separate ourselves from the sinful things of this world, we are not to remove ourselves from it. Paul said, *"I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people. Yet I certainly did not mean with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world"* (1 Corinthians 5:9-10). And Jesus said, *"I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one"* (John 17:15).

Closely related to God's holiness is His righteousness.<sup>xxiii</sup> God is not only Lord and King over all His creation; He is also the supreme judge of it, and this title has exclusively been given to His Son, as we read, *"He who was ordained by God to be Judge of the living and the dead"* (Acts 10:42). The Hebrew word for righteous is *Tzedek*, which means "rightness, straightness, rectitude; justice of a judge, of a king, of God, exhibited in punishing the wicked, or in avenging, delivering, rewarding the righteous."<sup>xxiv</sup> It is written, *"Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne; Mercy and truth go before Your face"* (Psalm 89:14).

Another Hebrew word for righteous judgment is *mishpat*, which means "judgment that is right or just." The Greek word for righteous is *dikaio*s and is defined in two parts: "of god—just, righteous, concerning His judgment of men and nations, a righteous judge; and of men—upright, just, righteous conforming to the laws of God and man, and living by them."

We must be careful with the last definition, as men are incapable of becoming righteous by conforming to and living by God's laws. Jesus said, *"Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill"* (Matthew 5:17). Only a perfect Son of God could fulfill a perfect Law. Therefore, the Bible says, *"There is none righteous, no, not one"* (Romans 3:10).

Only our faith in God, and now in Christ, are we imputed God's righteousness. It is not earned but granted freely by God, as we read concerning Abraham, *"Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification"* (Romans 4:23-25).

God is righteous because He always acts according to His holy nature and perfect will, and His righteousness is immutable. He is straight and upright, without iniquity. Thus, He is called “the Rock (*Ha’tsur*). His judgments are just and true, as the angels declare, “*True and righteous are His judgments*” (*Revelation 19:2*). His justice is unfailing, and He deals with humanity according to His holy nature, perfect Law, and covenants. He is above all unjust or deceitful treatment, punishing the wicked and bountifully rewarding His children.

God cannot and will not lie; by His omnipotent nature, He will not promise what He does not intend to do and will do what He has promised.<sup>xxv</sup> Yet we also understand that specific promises are conditional and predicated on our obedient response. And when God delays, it is always for our benefit. But in God’s time, governed by His unbound will and wisdom, He will be faithful to bring every covenant promise to fruition; to Israel, the church, and the nations.<sup>xxvi</sup>

As a righteous God, He has given humanity just laws to govern righteously. And since we are made in His image, humanity is born with God’s natural law in our hearts and the ability to choose what is good.<sup>xxvii</sup> However, we also have inherited Adam’s disobedient and sinful nature. Therefore, God requires us to do what is right and will punish those who commit evil. As we read, “*Do not turn to the right or the left; Remove your foot from evil*” (*Proverbs 4:37*).<sup>xxviii</sup>

But to Israel, God further gave His written law—the *Torah*. Paul said: “*As many as have sinned without law will also perish without law, and as many as have sinned in the law will be judged by the law*” (*Romans 2:12*). God made temporary provision for Israel’s justification through the Law of Moses by shedding animal blood. Therefore, God has held the Jewish people to a stricter standard since we know God’s righteous nature by His unwritten and written Law and, therefore, are without excuse.<sup>xxix</sup>

Again, we read: “*Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne; Mercy and truth go before Your face*” (*Psalms 89:14*). In the New Testament, the English translation of the words “righteousness” and “justice” derives from the same Greek word, and the word “justification” means the act of declaring one to be righteous. God requires our perfect righteousness, but our fallen nature prevents us from being anything but disobedient and sinful.

God loves us, but He is also a just and righteous King, and our justification is “God’s action of making us righteous in His sight.” Not by us somehow becoming sinless or earning our righteousness through virtuous deeds or the works of the Law. But only by inheriting the righteousness of Christ (the perfect Son of God), believing that He died for our sins. God could not pretend our sins never happened; He needed someone within the heavenly court to accept responsibility for them, and that someone is Jesus.

In Christ, we have permanent justification before God through His shed blood, as we read, “*For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins*



*that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus” (Romans 3:23-26).*

God will not act contrary to His holiness, which is manifest through his merciful actions and just rule and governance. In His mercy, God made way for sinful men to be justified before a holy and righteous God by offering His infinite Son as a perfect sacrifice. Hence, God’s righteousness and mercy were demonstrated on the cross in Christ’s propitiation for our sins and taking upon Himself a debt we could never pay.<sup>xxx</sup>

God’s holiness is preserved because He never acts contrary to His righteous nature. In His holiness, He is unapproachable, but He is intimately close to us in His love and mercy. Thus, we read:

*“He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins... And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him” (1 John 4:8-10, 14-16).*

God’s holiness and love encompass His moral attributes. These two seemingly irreconcilable attributes are brought together in the finished atoning work of Christ, where the demands of God’s holiness are satisfied, and the outpouring of His love is manifest.

Jesus declared: *“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” (John 14:6, NKJV).*<sup>xxxi</sup> Jesus’s words tell us that He is the only way of truth in this world that leads to eternal life; God’s love and kindness. But in the words of the sages: *“A world built on both kindness and justice could not long endure since these two opposites would clash with each other constantly. Only with the concept of truth (Emet) could the world find its necessary balance. Truth decides when to utilize kindness, when to utilize justice, and when to temper one with the other. When kindness and justice are blended in the proper measure, the result is truth.”*<sup>xxxii</sup>

That sounds like a powerful representation of the gospel. If God exclusively demonstrated His kindness towards us, He has ignored our sin. And if He only showed His justice towards us, then we would continually be subject to His eternal punishment for our sins.

When kindness and justice are combined, God’s truth is demonstrated through grace. And Jesus is that grace, for it is written, *“For the law [justice] was given through Moses, but grace [kindness] and truth came through Jesus Christ” (John 1:17).* Here, the writer has specifically linked grace and truth together. Grace is God’s love manifested through His revealed truth—who is Christ. And Jesus is the one who has tempered God’s justice with His loving-kindness.

Truth is conventionally defined as “that which is true or in accordance with fact or reality.”<sup>xxxiii</sup> From a Christian perspective, the gospel is true—that being that we are all sinners and Christ died to pay for our sins. Truth is also knowing and doing what is right—God’s Law—but Jesus did not tell people to follow the Law to obtain God’s grace.

On the contrary, He asked people to repent so they could receive God’s unmerited grace. It was unmerited because Christ tempered God’s justice by taking the punishment we deserved upon Himself. And more, Jesus bore the full wrath of God and thus became the way, the truth, and the life. But most importantly, He demonstrated on the cross that when God’s kindness and justice are blended in the proper measure, the result is truth.

If we believe all these things to be true, we conclude that God is the only unshakable standard of truth in this world. God is “truth” because He is the only true God, the creator of all things, and the objective of man’s worship.<sup>xxxiv</sup> And His word is “truth,” where God’s nature and attributes are revealed. Also, His will and purpose for humanity and His plan of salvation.<sup>xxxv</sup> Therefore, the truth of God is part of His holy nature, which, as we have discovered, is correlated with God’s righteousness and His love for us.<sup>xxxvi</sup>

The Hebrew word for love is *Ahava*. We first read of God’s love for Israel in Deuteronomy: *“For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth. The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; but because the LORD loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers” (Deuteronomy 7:6-8).*

In contrast, we read in Exodus of God’s holiness (*Kadosh*): *“Take heed to yourselves that you do not go up to the mountain or touch its base. Whoever touches the mountain shall surely be put to death” (Exodus 19:12).* Here we find God’s holiness is established in scripture long before His love towards Israel is mentioned. Even then, God’s love is provided in the context of His awe-inspiring holiness.<sup>xxxvii</sup> It is not that God changed in any way, for He is immutable (unchanging). But the Lord had not yet set apart the sons of Aaron to serve the Lord and administer God’s temporary covering for sin through the Aaronic priesthood. God’s holiness demands justice and righteousness for sinful men. With a propitiation for sin, either temporary or permanent, God’s holiness is preserved, and we are justified by God’s sacrifice and payment for sin.

God’s love for Israel and the Jewish people is seen throughout scripture, and He has remained patient and long-suffering despite their idolatry and sinful backsliding. I see God’s broken heart interwoven in prophecy with outbursts of jealous anger comingled with heart-loving promises for the Jewish people and their land. We read, *“Come now, and let us reason together,” Says the LORD, “Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool. If you are willing and obedient, You shall eat the good of the land” (Isaiah 1:18-19).*



In the New Testament, the Greek word for love has several meanings. But when referring to God's love, the only term used is *agape*. The lexicon defines *agape* love as: "to love, value, esteem, feel or manifest generous concern for, be faithful towards, to delight in, to set, store upon; whence—love, generosity, kindly concern, and devotedness." The noun *agape* is rarely used, giving us the most significant meaning of God's love in declaring that "God is love" (1 John 4:8), "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

God's love towards us is demonstrated in His salvation, eternal life, and the promise of a new body and spirit.<sup>xxxviii</sup> It is shown in His desire to provide for all our needs and sending the comforter, the Holy Spirit.<sup>xxxix</sup> God has invited us into His family and Kingdom and has adopted us as sons and daughters.<sup>xl</sup> He has redeemed our souls and provided bodily and spiritual healing.<sup>xli</sup> And He has given us the power of the Holy Spirit to preach the gospel and live a victorious life in Christ.<sup>xlii</sup>

## **The Works of God**

Scripture is clear regarding God's Divine purpose in the creation. He is omniscient and knows every detail of humanity and the nations from the beginning through the end. All God's works are sovereignly governed according to His plans and purposes. As we read: "God reigns over the nations; God sits on His holy throne" (Psalm 47:8); "Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, 'My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure,' Calling a bird of prey from the east, The man who executes My counsel, from a far country. Indeed I have spoken it; I will also bring it to pass. I have purposed it; I will also do it" (Isaiah 46:10-11).

We read: "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). The first word in Hebrew is *Be-reisheet*, "in the beginning." This word signifies the very act of creation—God brought "being" into existence from "non-being," something from nothing.<sup>xliii</sup> The creation started with God's wisdom, which our sages call "the beginning." We read, "O LORD, how manifold are Your works! In wisdom You have made them all" (Psalm 104:24). If we revisit Genesis, with emphasis added, it reads: "With the beginning (*Be-reisheet*), God's wisdom created (*bara*) the heavens and the earth."

God spoke His word and brought all into existence out of not—*ex nihilo*. Thus, by faith, we believe that the worlds were created by His word (*Rhema* in Greek). We read, "By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible" (Hebrews 11:3); "All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made" (John 1:3).

The sages tell us that God's spiritual tools, the Hebrew letters, are the foundation of all creation and are called the "letters of foundation." They are also called "stones." These stones are the

foundation for all that exists and the foundation of God's building—His church and Kingdom. Just as stones are excavated from a mountain of stone, so are the Hebrew letters hewn and cut from the four-letter name of God. As it is written, *"The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer" (Psalm 18:2).*

We read: *"By the word [speech] of the Lord the heavens were made, And all the host of them by the breath of His mouth" (Psalm 33:6).* Wind cutting letters in the form of speech is like one cutting building blocks from a mountain of stone, and sound, wind, and speech are all characteristics of the Holy Spirit. We read: *"The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, And His word was on my tongue" (2 Samuel 23:2).* The Holy Spirit emanates from the highest spiritual realm of God, as it is written: *"The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you" (Luke 1:35).*

The sages also tell us that the word "beginning" in Hebrew refers to wisdom. Therefore, God's wisdom reveals His unbound will and knowledge through the creation and now through Christ—the firstborn over all creation. As we read, *"The LORD by wisdom founded the earth; By understanding He established the heavens" (Proverbs 3:19).*

However, we need to recognize the difference between God's infinite light of His unbound Will (God's unknowable transcendence), and the limited light of His Wisdom and Understanding made known to creation (God's revealed immanence). We read, *"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).*

God's revealed will for us is that we should live, as He declared: *"I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live" (Deuteronomy 30:19).* God is good and did not create evil yet has allowed for its existence. Why He does remains a mystery.

Yet, we accept this truth—that a people redeemed from a world filled with moral depravity and sinfulness leading to eternal death and separation from God will forever be grateful to the one who saved them from this pitiful condition; as Paul cried, *"O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?" (Romans 7:24).*

God gave us life and breath and provided for our sustenance.<sup>xliv</sup> Not willing that any should perish, He provided a way for us to be washed clean of our sins and inherit eternal life in Christ.<sup>xlv</sup> Jesus said: *"Every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men" (Matthew 12:31).* God's love, His truth in the person of Christ, was poured out upon the nation of Israel, faithfully binding them to himself through a new and everlasting covenant as a husband betroths his wife.<sup>xlvi</sup> Jesus, the very name and essence of God's salvation, has come to Israel, and now His salvation is freely offered to all who choose Him.

Even before our creation, God foreknew those who would accept and those who would reject His Son. And for those in Christ, it was God's purpose that we would become His church (*ecclesia*), a great assembly (*kahal*) from every tongue, tribe, nation, and people.<sup>xlvii</sup> As we read, *"For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren"* (Romans 8:29). Thus, God's Divine purpose includes His church.

All events of nations, even our personal choices, are known to God from the beginning. And yet, God's Divine plan and purpose do not change. His unbound will is fulfilled without violating humanity's freedom to choose; our "free will."<sup>xlviii</sup> God never violates this freedom but does not absolve us of the responsibility for our decisions. In giving us this freedom, God will hold each person accountable for their actions. We read, *"He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained"* (Acts 17:31).

God is the supreme and sovereign judge and King over creation, and He works all things to His ultimate glory.<sup>xlix</sup> And the stewardship of the whole of creation has been given to the Son—Jesus. We read, *"All things have been delivered to Me by My Father"* (Matthew 11:27); *"For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist"* (Colossians 1:16-17).

God is both preserving and sovereignly controlling all He created. Preservation is defined as "that continuous agency of God by which He maintains in existence the things He has created together with the properties and powers with which He has endowed them."<sup>i</sup> And God's sovereignty is called "providence."

As Christians, by faith, we believe that God created the universe out of nothing, *ex nihilo*, which is irrational and impossible to comprehend. Thus, we recognize that the universe cannot continue to exist apart from the One who created it. God is holy, benevolent, wise, and omnipotent, and His preservation and providence are required; otherwise, the universe would cease to exist without Him.

God's providential oversight is demonstrated in His governance over the physical universe. We read: *"The Lord has established His throne in heaven, And His kingdom rules over all"* (Psalm 103:19). He governs the nations, as we read, *"For the kingdom is the Lord's, And He rules over the nations"* (Psalm 22:28).<sup>ii</sup> God cares for the animal realm, as it is written, *"Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them"* (Matthew 6:26).<sup>iii</sup>

But more importantly, God cares for us. We read, *"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you"* (Jeremiah 1:5); *"I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well. My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed"* (Psalm 139:14-16). And Jesus said, *"The very hairs of your head are all numbered"* (Matthew 10:30).

God has provided a way for everyone to find Him as we read: *“God has dealt to each one a measure of faith” (Romans 12:3)*. And *“He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us” (Acts 17:26-27)*.

God is personal, and He cares about our successes and failures. We read: *“He has put down the mighty from their thrones, And exalted the lowly” (Luke 1:52)*. He protects the righteous, as it says, *“I will both lie down in peace, and sleep; For You alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety” (Psalm 4:8)*.<sup>liii</sup> God supplies our wants and needs as we read, *“Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy” (1 Timothy 6:17)*.<sup>liv</sup> And He answers our prayers, as it says, *“When you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words. Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him” (Matthew 6:7-8)*.<sup>lv</sup>

Lastly, the Lord governs the reward of the righteous and judges the wicked. We read: *“For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the ungodly shall perish” (Psalm 1:6)*. However, we rejoice in knowing that *“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1)*. Jesus said, *“He who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life” (John 5:24)*.

As Christians, we have faith in God’s Divine providence. If we cannot trust the Lord, then who can we? Men will fail us, but the Lord never will. He is faithful. And yet, we find tribulation in the world, but Jesus comforted us by saying, *“In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world” (John 16:33)*. Jesus also promised to send us the helper and comforter, the Holy Spirit.<sup>lvi</sup> Only in Him do we find *“The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:7)*.

God’s love and presence now dwelling in us will cast out all fear.<sup>lvii</sup> And in Christ, we can endure and overcome all things in this world because we trust in God’s Divine providence. As it is written, *“You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.” (1 John 4:4, 5:4)*.

Amen!

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<sup>i</sup> John 5:26. Colossians 1:17. Malachi 3:6-7. James 1:17. Hebrews 13:8. 1 Kings 8:56. Romans 8:38-39. 1 Timothy 1:17. Exodus 3:14. Psalm 90:2. Revelation 1:8, 22:13. 1 John 5:12. Jeremiah 23:23-24. 1 Kings 8:27. Matthew 28:20. John 14:16-17, 16:8. Psalm 139:1-4. 2 Kings 5:20-27. Acts 5:1-11. Revelation 2:1-3:22. Ephesians 1:8-10, 3:9-11. Romans 8:28. Jeremiah 32:17. Ephesians 1:4-5. Revelation 22:17. Matthew 25:37. John 3:16.

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- ii Chabad.org. Psalm 8:5.
- iii All Scripture quotations are taken from the New King James Bible (NKJV) unless otherwise noted, Thomas Nelson Inc., 1982.
- iv Psalm 31:21.
- v Isaiah 11:1-2 (NKJV and Sefaria).
- vi Revelation 3:1.
- vii Isaiah 53:10.
- viii Psalm 31:24. Mathew 25:34. John 3:14-15. Romans 10:15. 1 Corinthians 2:16. 1 Peter 5:4.
- ix 2 Corinthians 1:22.
- x 2 Corinthians 4:18. Isaiah 40:15. Daniel 4:35. Genesis 18:14. Acts 17:6. Ephesians 1:18-20-2:6.
- xi Ephesians 1:4-5.
- xii Matthew 23:37. John 3:16, 5:40, 6:37. Revelation 22:17.
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- xxiii Genesis 18:25. Deuteronomy 32:4. Romans 3:25-26.
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- xxv Numbers 23:19.
- xxvi Hebrews 10:23. 2 Corinthians 1:20. 2 Peter 3:4. 1 Kings 8:56. 2 Peter 1:4.
- xxvii Romans 2:14.
- xxviii Deuteronomy 18:13. Matthew 5:48.
- xxix Luke 12:48.
- xxx Romans 3:21-26, 5:1.
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- xxxiii Truth. Oxford Dictionary.
- xxxiv John 4:23-24.
- xxxv Psalm 119:89. John 17:17.
- xxxvi Deuteronomy 32:4. Titus 1:2. John 1:14, 14:6. Romans 3:4.
- xxxvii Deuteronomy 4:37.
- xxxviii John 3:16. Ezekiel 11:19, 18:31, 36:26. 2 Corinthians 3:6. Revelation 2:17.
- xxxix Romans 8:32. James 1:17. Philippians 4:19. John 14:15-16, 16:7.
- xl Ephesians 5:25-30. John 3:5. Romans 8:14, 19, 9:26.
- xli Psalm 49:15. Luke 9:6. 1 Corinthians 12:9, 28, 30. 3 John 1:2. Revelation 22:2.
- xlii Luke 1:35, 24:49. John 16:33. Romans 15:19. 1 Corinthians 2:4.
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- xlvi Isaiah 54:5. Zechariah 2:8. Isaiah 62:4.
- xlvii Revelation 5:9.
- xlviii Isaiah 44:28, 45:1-4. Ezekiel 1:1-6.
- xlix Romans 8:28.
- l Strong, 410.

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- li Psalm 66:7.
  - lii Psalm 104:21.
  - liii Psalm 75:6-7. Romans 8:28.
  - liiv Philippians 4:19.
  - liv Matthew 6:33.
  - lvi John 14:16.
  - lvii 1 John 4:18.