

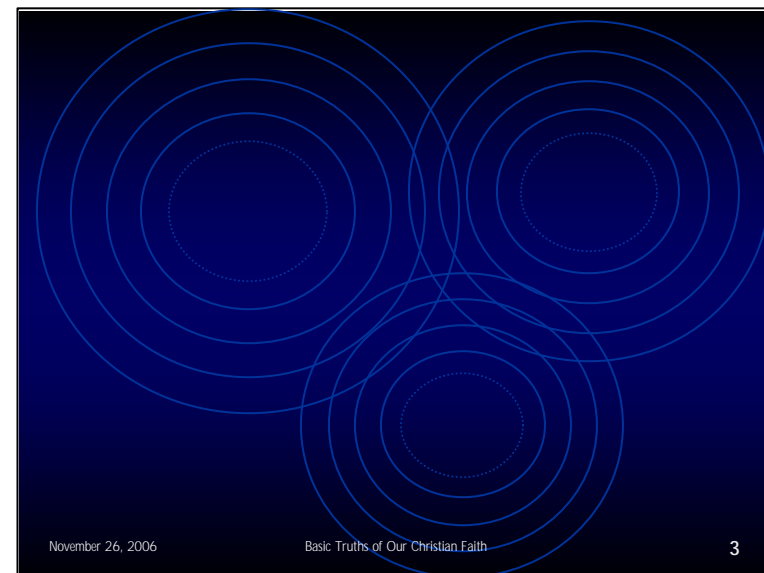
- A. This morning we are continuing our series on the great basic truths of our Christian Faith.
- B. We shall return to this series from time to time as we have opportunity.
- C. For the most part these are truths that are held by Christian Church regardless of denomination.
- D. About a month ago we dealt with our first subject: God's Revelation — The Bible ... the basis of all Christian Teaching and Practice.
- E. Today we shall build upon that, using the Scriptures to enquire into the Nature of God
- F. To do so, we shall be looking at this great passage in Isaiah
- G. Israel needed a revitalized picture of God, as the prophet Isaiah saw Him ... high and exalted
- H. Our Scripture Reading, Isaiah 40:12–31 (NAS): ¹² Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, And marked off the heavens by the span, And calculated the dust of the earth by the measure, And weighed the mountains in a balance, And the hills in a pair of scales? ¹³ Who has directed the Spirit of the LORD, Or as His counsellor has informed Him? ¹⁴ With whom did He consult and who gave Him understanding? And who taught Him in the path of justice and taught Him knowledge, And informed Him of the way of understanding? ¹⁵ Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket, And are regarded as a speck of dust on the scales; Behold, He lifts up the islands like fine dust. ¹⁶ Even Lebanon is not enough to burn, Nor its beasts enough for a burnt offering. ¹⁷ All the nations are as nothing before



18 "To whom then will you liken God? Or what likeness will you compare with Him? ¹⁹ As for the idol, a craftsman casts it, A goldsmith plates it with gold, And a silversmith fashions chains of silver. ²⁰ He who is too impoverished for such an offering Selects a tree that does not rot; He seeks out for himself a skilful craftsman To prepare an idol that will not totter. ²¹ Do you not know? Have you not heard? Has it not been declared to you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? ²² It is He who sits above the vault of the earth, And its inhabitants are like grasshoppers, Who stretches out the heavens like a curtain And spreads them out like a tent to dwell in. ²³ He it is who reduces rulers to nothing, Who makes the judges of the earth meaningless. ²⁴ Scarcely have they been planted, Scarcely have they been sown, Scarcely has their stock taken root in the earth, But He merely blows on them, and they wither, And the storm carries them away like stubble. ²⁵ 'To whom then will you liken Me That I should be his equal?' says the Holy One. ²⁶ Lift up your eyes on high And see who has created these stars, The One who leads forth their host by number, He calls them all by name; Because of the greatness of His might and the strength of His power Not one of them is missing.



27 Why do you say, O Jacob, and assert, O Israel, 'My way is hidden from the LORD, And the justice due me escapes the notice of my God'? 28 Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth Does not become weary or tired. His understanding is inscrutable. 29 He gives strength to the weary, And to him who lacks might He increases power. 30 Though youths grow weary and tired, And vigorous young men stumble badly, 31 Yet those who wait for the LORD Will gain new strength; They will mount up with wings like eagles, They will run and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary.



- A. To set our thinking together, let's try a few questions
 1. This series is intended to involve your participation, so feel free to speak out if you have an answer, a comment, a question
 2. And here is the first question
 - a. What assumption underlies all of the Bible
 3. That God exists
- B. The Scriptures do not prove that God exists
 1. They merely state it to be so
 2. They give evidence of His existence
 3. But they do not prove this fact – this may trouble you for a moment; but think ...
 4. For, to prove this fact would be to reduce God to a Theorem, an Object to be comprehended by human minds
 5. And, we will see today that God cannot be reduced to a Theorem or an Object; He cannot be put into a test-tube

Some questions ...

- A. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." (Genesis 1:1 NAS)
- B. What is the basic assumption of the Holy Scriptures?
 1. GOD IS
 2. The Name YAHWEH or JEHOVAH has as its meaning the statement that God made to Moses: 'I AM THAT I AM'

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- A. According to this verse, what is the primary tenet – that which must be first believed before anything else can be believed – of faith?
- B. The belief that God exists, that He is
 1. As it is foundational to the Holy Scriptures
 2. So it is foundational to our faith
 3. Every act of worship – seeking to please Him – proceeds from this belief
 4. All searching for salvation – seeking His rewards – is predicated upon this belief

... another question ...

- A. “And without faith it is impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.” (Hebrews 11:6 NAS)
- B. What is the primary tenet of faith?
 1. The belief that God exists, that He is
 2. ... this belief is necessary for worship
 3. ... this belief is necessary for salvation

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- A. I know that Zophar was not inspired in his statement, and that 'he did not say that which was right of God' but he was often, as here, theologically correct – he just applied his theology wrongly. Besides, his point is found through Scripture
- B. Paul's words are particularly on the matter of God's plan of salvation through Jesus' death on our behalf, but they are of general application in speaking of God's nature

... and now, a few verses ...

- A. Zophar's question, "Can you discover the depths of God? Can you discover the limits of the Almighty?" (Job 11:7 NAS)
- B. Paul's exclamation, "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became his counsellor?" (Romans 11:33-34 NAS)

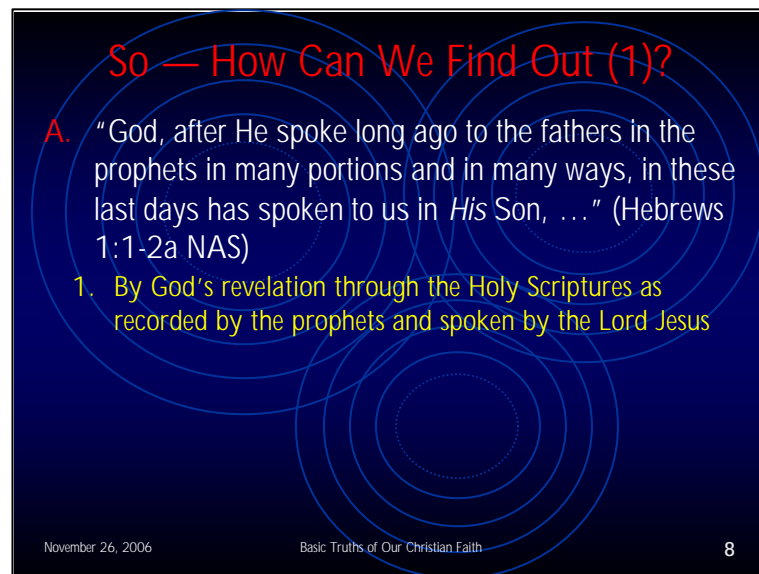
- A. Can God's nature be discovered by unaided human thinking, by logic or rational thought, by deduction?
- B. No ... we will see in a moment what kind of gods human efforts bring into being
- C. "'For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Neither are your ways My ways," declares the Lord. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts." (Isaiah 55:8-9 NAS)

... and more:

- A. "and again, 'The Lord knows the reasonings of the wise, that they are useless.'" (1 Corinthians 3:20 NAS, quoting Psalm 94:11)
- B. Is GOD's nature to be found by human intelligence?
 1. No, He is beyond the grasp of our ken
 2. And the Bible shows that this is because we operate with a mind that has been made faulty by sin

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- A. So, that now raises the question for us, if we are to learn about God's Nature, the subject before us ...
- B. How can we find out?
 1. Well let's look at three ways, in what I think is the logical order ... first
 2. The Knowledge of who God is, of what His Nature is
 3. Is to be found only by His revelation, His revealing Himself to us



So — How Can We Find Out (1)?

- A. "God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in *His Son*, ..." (Hebrews 1:1-2a NAS)
- 1. By God's revelation through the Holy Scriptures as recorded by the prophets and spoken by the Lord Jesus

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- A. The second step of knowing who God is, what His nature is, we find here
1. It is found in the birth of the Eternal Son of God into humankind
 2. But this introduces something further in knowing who God is, what His nature is
 - a. "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name," (John 1:12 NAS)
 - b. "Jesus *said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me." (John 14:6 NAS)
 3. The ability is to know who God is, what His nature is, in inextricably linked to
 - a. a personal knowledge of God through acceptance of Jesus Christ, the Son of God as our own personal Saviour
 - b. Because the new birth is the only way a sin-disabled mind can come to such knowledge

So — How Can We Find Out (2)?

- A. "No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained *Him*." (John 1:18 NAS)
 - B. "Jesus said to him, 'Have I been so long with you, and *yet* you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how do you say, "Show us the Father"?' (John 14:9 NAS)
1. The Incarnation of God the Son was to reveal the Nature of God

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A. Which brings us to the third part of the answer to this question

1. The same regenerating Holy Spirit
2. That brings about the new birth
3. Is He who teaches us spiritual truth

So — How Can We Find Out (3)?

A. "For to us God revealed *them* through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. For who among men knows the *thoughts* of a man except the spirit of the man, which is in him? Even so the *thoughts* of God no one knows except the Spirit of God." (1 Corinthians 2:10-11 NAS)

1. By the work of God the Holy Spirit who brings the knowledge of God to the consciousness of man

A. Now let us go back to the passage we read, Isaiah 40:19-20

1. One of the evidences for the existence of God is the pervading existence of religion
2. This is only one of a number of false ideas about God that were present then and now
 - a. 1 Kings 20:28 Then a man of God came near and spoke to the king of Israel and said, "Thus says the LORD, 'Because the Arameans have said, "The LORD is a god of *the* mountains, but He is not a god of *the* valleys"; therefore I will give all this great multitude into your hand, and you shall know that I am the LORD.'" – that God was a localized God
 - b. Elijah cast into the teeth of the prophets of Ba'al their false ideas of God: "And it came about at noon, that Elijah mocked them and said, "Call out with a loud voice, for he is a god; either he is occupied or gone aside, or is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and needs to be awakened." So they cried with a loud voice" (1 Kings 18:27-28a NAS)

Clearing away some false ideas

- A. "As for the idol, a craftsman casts it, A goldsmith plates it with gold, And a silversmith *fashions* chains of silver. He who is too impoverished for *such* an offering Selects a tree that does not rot; He seeks out for himself a skillful craftsman To prepare an idol that will not totter." (Isaiah 40:19-20 NAS)
- B. What characterized idols, false gods, in Isaiah's day?
 1. They were the product of man's hands and skills
 2. They were made of what man considered precious
 3. They were vanities, useless objects

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- A. What Paul has to say in Romans 1 applies from the first chapter of Genesis to the end of Revelation
- B. Where do idols come from?
 1. Man's sin-darkened thoughts
 2. A desire for a god, but not the Holy God of the Bible

Idols: false ideas about God ...

- A. "For even though they knew God, they did not honour Him as God, or give thanks; but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures."
(Romans 1:21-23 NAS)
- B. Where do idols, false gods, come from?
 1. Man's imagination made futile because of sin

- A. This is only a partial list .. But people are still inventing gods in their own image ... anything but worship and submit to the one true God who has revealed Himself in the Holy Scriptures
- B. Let's now go through this Isaiah passage and discover just a few of the attributes of God that are describe in it
 - 1. We will not exhaust this subject today
 - 2. We won't exhaust what the Bible has to say about it
 - 3. In fact, we won't even exhaust what these verses say
- C. And our question will be the same in each case ...
 - 1. What does this verse teach us about God's Nature? ... about His attributes or character?

False Gods ...

- A. What false gods exist today?
 - 1. **The world religions that teach**
 - a. Pantheism – God is to be found in each object
 - b. Animism – God is to be found in every living spirit
 - c. Polytheism – there are many gods, each for different situations
 - d. The Occult – worship of demons as gods
 - e. Caricatures of God as capricious or saving even the unrepentant
 - 2. **Wealth; False science (evolution)**
 - 3. **Anything that**
 - a. Stands between an individual and the one true God
 - b. The individual substitutes for the one true God

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- A. This passage uses a word-picture to communicate how great God is
1. Part of that word-picture is what is called an 'anthropomorphism'
 2. That is, describing God in human terms so that we can begin to get some idea of what God is like
 3. The Bible does this often in order to communicate truth about God
 4. But we should not think of His having a physical form such as ours
 5. The visions of Ezekiel of the glory of God show how false it would be to think of God as just an 'enlarged person'

Isaiah 40:12

A. "Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, And marked off the heavens by the span, And calculated the dust of the earth by the measure, And weighed the mountains in a balance, And the hills in a pair of scales?" (Isaiah 40:12 NAS)

B. Here we learn that ...

1. God is all-knowing (omniscient)
2. He completely knows His creation
3. He is incomprehensibly greater than His creation

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- A. There is no development with God
1. He is perfect in every aspect of His being
 2. He is the God who does not change, the unmoved Mover
 3. In particular, here we find that He is eternally complete respecting
 - a. His plans and purposes (sovereign)
 - b. His understanding and knowledge (omniscient)
 - c. His justice (righteous)
 - d. He is these things always without variableness

Isaiah 40:13-14

A. "Who has directed the Spirit of the Lord, Or as His counsellor has informed Him? With whom did He consult and *who* gave Him understanding? And *who* taught Him in the path of justice and taught Him knowledge, And informed Him of the way of understanding?" (Isaiah 40:13-14 NAS)

B. Here we see that God is eternally ...

1. In charge of His plans and purposes (sovereign)
2. Complete in His understanding and knowledge (omniscient)
3. Filled with justice (righteous)

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- A. How do you convey the immensity of God?
 - 1. We will see other ways the Holy Spirit seeks to convey this through Isaiah in later verses.
 - 2. But here it is done through the use of pictures
- B. But, God, though immanent, permeating all of His creation, is at the same time, transcendent, existing outside of independent of the creation which He has formed

Isaiah 40:15, 17

- A. "Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket, And are regarded as a speck of dust on the scales; Behold, He lifts up the islands like fine dust. ... All the nations are as nothing before Him, They are regarded by Him as less than nothing and meaningless." (Isaiah 40:15, 7 NAS)
- B. Here we see that God is ...
 - 1. Immense, engulfing all humankind
 - 2. Transcendent, far above and beyond His creation

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- A. Here's a hard lesson for us to learn!
- B. When we have made a special effort of service, or given an especially large donation ... what do we think of ourselves?
- C. 'Boy, God must be pleased with me!'
- D. But what is the truth of the matter?
- E. 'Without faith it is impossible to please God...'

Isaiah 40:16

A. "Even Lebanon is not enough to burn, Nor its beasts enough for a burnt offering." (Isaiah 40:16 NAS)

B. Here we learn that God is ...

1. Beyond the reach of our efforts, even our religious ones
2. God does not accept our worship because of its goodness, or its power, or how much we sacrifice to give it
3. But simply and purely because of His grace toward us

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- A. God's Unity and God's Uniqueness follow the one from the other
 - 1. If God is Unique, He is not more than one Being or Essence
 - 2. If God is one Being or Essence, there is none like Him
- B. Christianity does not teach
 - 1. That there are three gods
 - 2. But that there is one God
 - 3. Who is manifest in Three distinct Persons
 - 4. And, Lord willing, we will look further into this when we discuss the Trinity, looking at 'The Personality of God'

Isaiah 40:18, 25

- A. "To whom then will you liken God? Or what likeness will you compare with Him?" (Isaiah 40:18 NAS)
- B. "'To whom then will you liken Me That I should be *his* equal?' says the Holy One." (Isaiah 40:25 NAS)
- C. Here we learn that God is ...
 - 1. Incomparable
 - 2. Unique
 - 3. And the truth that follows from this is that God is Unity – 'the LORD (YAHWEH or JEHOVAH) is our God, the LORD is One' (Deuteronomy 6:4b)

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A. Consider this statement about God and all of its ramifications

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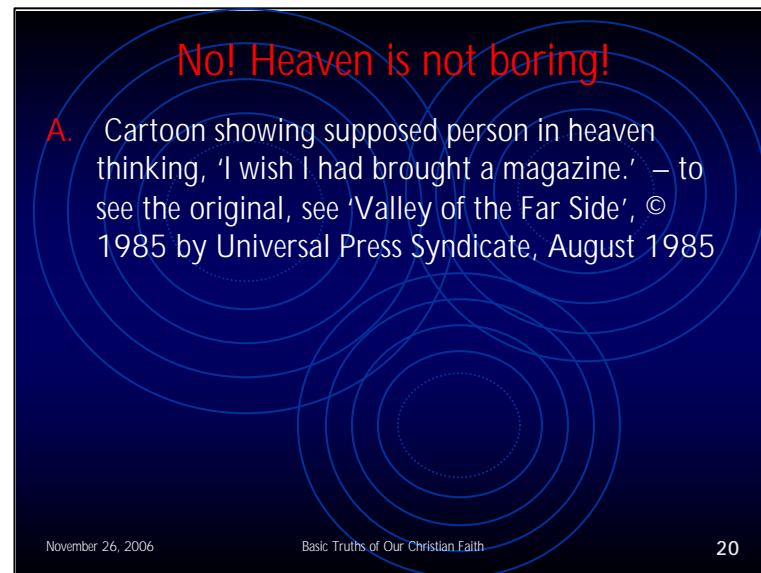
God's fundamental attribute

A. The basic truth about God that makes it impossible for us to adequately compare or describe Him is that ...

1. He is infinite in every dimension but we are finite
 - a. He is infinite in time ... eternal
 - b. He is infinite in space ... omnipresent
 - c. He is infinite in power ... omnipotent
 - d. He is infinite in knowledge ... omniscient
2. And this is what makes heaven to be heaven

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- A. This is the world's concept of heaven
- B. But it is not the Christian's
- C. And, it is not the truth!
- D. Because of God's infinitude we will eternally be discovering wonderful things about God: about our Heavenly Father, our Saviour God, and the Holy Spirit
- E. Last Sunday as I announced today's subject, I stumbled a bit
- F. Because I realized that I had inadvertently suggested we would examine ALL God's nature
- G. For really, our examination this morning only touches on one or two aspect of Who God Is.



- A. In these verses we have a contrast between God and earthly rulers
1. What marks the difference ... what is the characteristic of earthly rulers (remember our reading from Daniel?)?
 - a. They are set up and taken down by God
 - b. They are transitory, temporary, brief in their rule
 2. ... and of God?
 - a. He is above them all
 - b. He has been there for all of time's existence

Isaiah 40:21, 23-24

A. "Do you not know? Have you not heard? Has it not been declared to you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? ... He *it is* who reduces rulers to nothing, Who makes the judges of the earth meaningless. Scarcely have they been planted, Scarcely have they been sown, Scarcely has their stock taken root in the earth, But He merely blows on them, and they wither, And the storm carries them away like stubble." (Isaiah 40:21, 23-24 NAS); God is

1. **Eternally sovereign**

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- A. This same God is, for the believer, the one who has numbered everyone of our hairs, Matthew 10:30
1. Why is that so?
 2. It's so that for people like me when we get to heaven He will put every one of them back in place!
- B. And this brings us close to the most important, for us, conclusion that we can draw this morning

Isaiah 40:22, 26

A. "It is He who sits above the vault of the earth, And its inhabitants are like grasshoppers, Who stretches out the heavens like a curtain And spreads them out like a tent to dwell in. ... Lift up your eyes on high And see who has created these *stars*, The One who leads forth their host by number, He calls them all by name; Because of the greatness of His might and the strength of *His* power Not one *of them* is missing." (Isaiah 40:22,26 NAS); He is

1. Creator of the universe, both microcosm and macrocosm
2. Also the Sustainer of the universe in the same way

November 26, 2006 Basic Truths of Our Christian Faith 22

- A. God cares for mankind
 - 1. Israel thought that because they were suffering chastening and punishment
 - 2. 'God does not care'

Isaiah 40:27-28

A. "Why do you say, O Jacob, and assert, O Israel, 'My way is hidden from the Lord, And the justice due me escapes the notice of my God'? Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth Does not become weary or tired. His understanding is inscrutable."
(Isaiah 40:27-28 NAS)

B. From this we learn that God ...

- 1. Does not miss seeing one thing that occurs in His creation
- 2. His non-intervention in wrongs is not a sign of weakness

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- A. Is this not a marvel
1. Consider all that we have seen to be true about God and His nature
 2. In these verses this morning
 3. In the hymns that we have sung
 4. O Lord, My God . . . How Great Thou Art!
 5. And He cares for man, man a sinner, man a rebel against Him and against His law

Isaiah 40:29-31

A. "He gives strength to the weary, And to *him who* lacks might He increases power. Though youths grow weary and tired, And vigorous young men stumble badly, Yet those who wait for the Lord Will gain new strength; They will mount up *with wings like eagles*, They will run and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary." (Isaiah 40:29-31 NAS)

B. From this we learn that God . . .

1. Does care for mankind
2. Will deal graciously with those who turn to Him

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- A. Let us praise God for this great truth of Who He Is by singing, in closing, All People That On Earth Do Dwell.

God Loves You

A. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." (John 3:16 NAS)

1. God, the Eternal Creator
2. Has stepped into time and space
3. In the person of the Son of God
4. In order that He might save you from your sin
5. Here is sufficient reason to accept Jesus as Saviour
6. Here is sufficient reason to walk pleasing to Him

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