

GENESIS

Part Three: Passing The Promise



Leaders

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How This Study Is Organized

From the Message:

To get the most out of this study, attend the worship services or listen to the message online. While you listen, take notes and include your thoughts, questions, and insights. Make it a goal, whenever possible, to listen to the message before engaging in discussion with your life group.

Share Together:

Discussions will begin with a question that everyone can relate to; this time is designed to reiterate the unique relationship we share as believers and the importance of belonging in community.

Study Together:

The depth of our conversations is found in the study of God's Word; this time reminds us of the sufficiency of Scripture and the importance of believing it has authority over all areas of life.

Sent Together:

This study ends with applying what you have learned; this is a time of reshaping our attitudes and behaviors in becoming disciples of Jesus.

Ideas For Group Time:

BE PREPARED. As students of the Word knowing and understanding the material ahead of time can lead to a vibrant group discussion. Consider underlining passages, making notes and being familiar with the material for when your group meets.

LISTEN. We are a church family so be aware of how much you share and leave time for others. Listen closely to others' ideas and remember great conversations include everyone's thoughts and insights.

GROUP TALK. We are a community of believers and the time we share together should reflect a genuine level of care and concern for one another. Not every question needs to be answered by everyone and it is helpful to avoid getting off topic.

PRAYER. Hearing each other's needs and taking them to Jesus is one of the most loving things we can do. Consider writing down prayer requests and following up with one another on how God is working in their life.

The Beginnings I-II



The Fall

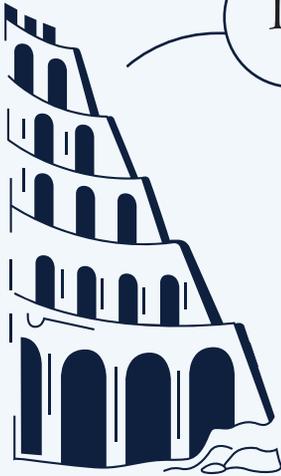


Cain & Abel

Flood & Noahic
Covenant



Tower of Babel



God Calls Abram
12 - 20



Abrahamic



Jacob and Esau are born

God provides a wife for Isaac



Isaac is Born
21 - 26

Sodom is Destroyed



Covenant

Birth of Isaac

Genesis 21:1-7

✦ Share Together

- Share a time when the reality of something seemed so impossible, but God made it happen.

✦ Study Together

- Discuss together how God finishes what He starts, how He perfectly fulfills His promises, and how His word never returns to Him void (Isaiah 55:11). What does God accomplish in waiting to fulfill His promises (v1)?
- The birth of Isaac is of great significance to our Christian faith (Galatians 4:21-23). How does Isaac's birth represent something that only God can do (vv2-3)? How does Ishmael represent human effort: what man tries to do without God?
- God chose the birth of Isaac so that we would know that a life of faith requires total dependence on God. How are faith and dependence interwoven in living an obedient life?
- While Abraham laughed in shock (Gen 17:17), Sarah laughed in unbelief (Gen 18:12-15); however, when Isaac was born, their laughter turned to joy. How is naming Isaac: "he laughs" a reminder and testimony of God's provision and promise (vv5-7)?

✦ Sent Together

- How do conversations centered on our dependence on God create an opportunity to share the gospel?

Notes:

Attribute

Choose an attribute of God that you see in the passage and then complete the sentence below. If needed, there is a list of God's attributes in the back of the book.

✦ This passage reveals that God is _____ (attribute)
by the way He _____.

✦ Daily Reading

___ Hebrews 11:8-12

___ Galatians 4:28-31

___ Luke 1:46-55

___ Psalms 126:1-6

___ Joshua 23:14-16

Hagar and Ishmael

Genesis 21:8-21

✦ Share Together

- Share a time when God heard and answered your cry.

✦ Study Together

- Abraham's household was once again divided between human effort and obedient faith (vv8-11). Discuss how it's impossible for human effort and obedient faith to coexist.

A peaceful coexistence was not possible. There will always be a conflict when human effort runs counter to God's will.

- Isaac would grow up as an only child with an estranged half-brother. How would God use this family crisis and situation to fulfill his promise and establish a new nation (v12)?
- Ishmael's name reminds us that "God hears." How does God's response to Sarah, Hagar, and Ishmael reveal His heart for those who cry out to Him (vv12-19)?
- Hagar was left with little choice in conceiving her son, and Ishmael didn't ask to be born into the situation. How does their lack of choice show God's sovereignty in the midst of human will? How did God tenderly care for Hagar and Ishmael despite their being sent away (vv15-21)?

✦ Sent Together

- How do the trials and hardships we face lend to the credibility of our testimony that the Lord rescues those who look to Him?

Notes:

Attribute

Choose an attribute of God that you see in the passage and then complete the sentence below. If needed, there is a list of God's attributes in the back of the book.

✦ This passage reveals that God is _____ (attribute),
and shows me that I am _____.

✦ Daily Reading

- ___ Genesis 16:7-12
- ___ Psalms 46:1-7
- ___ Deuteronomy 10:17-22
- ___ Isaiah 41:17-20
- ___ Psalms 10:12-18

A Treaty with Abimelech

Genesis 21:22-34

✦ Share Together

- Discuss whether it is appropriate for believers to make agreements or partnerships with nonbelievers.

✦ Study Together

- Through Abraham's travels, battles, and missteps, it became broadly known that God was with him in all that he did (v22). What does Abimelech's statement reveal (vv22b-23), and why was it necessary to make it before he sought a peace agreement with Abraham?
- As Abraham walked with God, it became evident to others that Abraham had nothing to fear (Gen 15:1). What does God show Abraham by securing the well (vv25-30)?

Possessing the well meant Abraham could live securely; Beersheba would become a boundary for Israel, indicating God's establishment of the promised land.

- Reflect on Abraham's first interaction with King Abimelech (Gen 20:1-18) and his scheme to try to find security. How was this agreement, or alliance, different than their first encounter (vv26-30)?

Abimelech isn't seeking anything in return; instead, the oath highlights his honesty and integrity.

- We don't know how much Abimelech knew about the one true God, but he at least knew enough to see clearly that God made a difference in Abraham's life. How did this become remarkable in light of Abraham's nomadic life with trade and alliances?

✦ Sent Together

- How can we use the truths from this week's conversation to pursue those who have not yet put their faith in Christ?

Notes:

Attribute

Choose an attribute of God that you see in the passage and then complete the sentence below. If needed, there is a list of God's attributes in the back of the book.

✦ This passage reveals that God is _____ (attribute),
which reminds me to _____.

✦ Daily Reading

- ___ Psalms 20:6-8
- ___ James 4:13-17
- ___ Proverbs 16:7-9
- ___ 2 Chronicles 16:9
- ___ Psalms 91:1-16

Sacrifice of Isaac

Genesis 22:1-34

✦ Share Together

- Describe a time when you felt God's provision arrived right when you needed it most.

✦ Study Together

- "After these things" (referring to chapters 12-21), God had emptied Abraham of his schemes and efforts to help bring about God's promises. What were some of the things that God had stripped Abraham of?

Relying on his wealth and strength, on his own timing or plans, on his own alliances and promises.

- Discuss what it means to be tested by God (Psalms 66:10-12; Jeremiah 17:10). What does God accomplish in testing Abraham (1 Peter 1:6-7)?

God is glorified, as He provides the ram and reveals Himself as the Savior.

- Though it is not specifically answered in Scripture, discuss why you think God commanded Abraham to sacrifice Isaac (vv1-2).
 - *God's command to sacrifice Isaac was to test Abraham's faith.*
 - *God's command to sacrifice Isaac was to provide an example of absolute obedience (v3).*
 - *God's command to sacrifice Isaac was to reveal God as Jehovah-Jireh (vv13-14)*
 - *God's command to sacrifice Isaac was to foreshadow God's sacrifice of His own Son.*

- God required a sacrifice, and He provided the sacrifice. How did Abraham's sacrifice of the ram (vv13-14) satisfy the demands of God's holiness and justice? How does this foreshadow Jesus becoming the sacrificial lamb?

✦ Sent Together

- How does understanding the significance of the ram and the Lord's saving grace help us in sharing the gospel with others?

Notes:

Attribute

Choose an attribute of God that you see in the passage and then complete the sentence below. If needed, there is a list of God's attributes in the back of the book.

✦ This passage reveals that God is _____ (attribute) by the way He _____.

✦ Daily Reading

- ___ Leviticus 17:11
- ___ Exodus 12:3-13
- ___ Isaiah 53:4-6
- ___ I Peter 1:13-21
- ___ John 3:16-18

Sarah's Death

Genesis 23:1-20

✦ Share Together

- Share a decision a relative made years ago that ended up having a long-term impact on you or your family.

✦ Study Together

- Discuss the grace of God and how the Lord finishes the work He begins (Philippians 1:6). What were the indicators that Sarah lived a full life (vv1-2), fulfilling God's purposes (Hebrews 11:11)?

Living out her last days in Canaan, Hebron and the birth of Isaac became a testimony of God's grace and fulfilled promises.

- It would have been customary to bury a person in their native homeland. How did God's call on Abraham's life to occupy Canaan guide his decision to bury Sarah in Hebron (vv17-20)?

This cave would later become the burial place of Abraham, Isaac and Rebekah, and Jacob and Leah.

- Discuss the importance of the land negotiations and the length that Abraham went to secure a burial plot for Sarah (vv4-16). How would Moses and the Israelites view the land of Canaan, and how did it impact their decision to occupy the land?

The extended transaction in which Abraham purchases and secures a burial plot demonstrates his obedient faith in God's promise and confirms God's will for his descendants to occupy Canaan.

- Note that the field and cave of Machpelah would have been the only land that Abraham would have owned in Canaan. In purchasing the land and paying the market value (v16), what was Abraham trusting God would do?

✦ Sent Together

- How is God providing unique opportunities to share the gospel with others this spring?

Notes:

Attribute

Choose an attribute of God that you see in the passage and then complete the sentence below. If needed, there is a list of God's attributes in the back of the book.

✦ This passage reveals that God is _____ (attribute),
and shows me that I am _____.

✦ Daily Reading

- ___ Genesis 17:8
- ___ Ephesians 1:3-10
- ___ I Corinthians 15:17-19
- ___ Romans 8:28-30
- ___ Isaiah 46:8-10

A Bride for Isaac

Genesis 24:1-67

✦ Share Together

- Do the details of our lives—job offers, minor detours, even marriage proposals—occur by coincidence, or are they shaped by God’s sovereign plan?

✦ Study Together

- Discuss why it was important for Isaac to be married to someone from Ur and of Abraham’s kindred (vv1-4)? What was the concern in him marrying a local Canaanite? Why was it also important that Isaac not return to Chaldea (vv5-9)?
- The faithful servant Eliezer (Gen 15:2) accepts the role/task Abraham has put before him. Taking a hefty dowry, he returns to Mesopotamia looking for a young woman to be Isaac’s wife. What specific characteristics was Eliezer hoping to find in Isaac’s soon-to-be bride (vv10-14)?

Eliezer, an almost heir of Abraham, was devoted to the Lord and his master. He patiently waited for the Lord to reveal a woman with a serving and a compassionate heart (vv15-21).

- Rebekah’s parents acknowledged that the Lord had led Eliezer to them and consented to Rebekah becoming Isaac’s wife (vv. 50–51). How does Rebekah’s family’s blessing relate to the Lord and His promise to a future Israel (vv59-61)?

We don’t know whether Rebekah’s family had faith in God, but their hope for Rebekah’s future echoed what God had already promised to Abraham through Isaac.

- Remember that Moses wrote Genesis for a people preparing to enter and conquer the land of Canaan—the very land God had promised to Abraham and his descendants. How would this passage of Scripture encourage the Israelites in obedience and to seek the Lord’s guidance?

✦ Sent Together

- How does knowing the Lord fulfills His promises give you peace in pursuing gospel conversations?

Notes:

Attribute

Choose an attribute of God that you see in the passage and then complete the sentence below. If needed, there is a list of God's attributes in the back of the book.

✦ This passage reveals that God is _____ (attribute),
which reminds me to _____.

✦ Daily Reading

- ___ Psalms 37:23-24
- ___ Proverbs 20:22-25
- ___ Jeremiah 10:23-24
- ___ Philippians 4:17-20
- ___ Psalms 119:113-120

The Death of Abraham

Genesis 25:1-18

✦ Share Together

- Work together to imagine what Abraham's eulogy might say.

✦ Study Together

- As you review Abraham's life (chapters 12-24), discuss how he learned to walk by faith and how God developed him into the Father of Nations. Refer to the Order of Salvation on pg. 27-28, how do you see God's sovereign election at work in Abraham's salvation story?
- Consider the list of Keturah's sons (vv2-4) and Ishmael's sons (vv13-18). Why is it important that they are included in the passage and where did Abraham send them to settle and live (vv6 & 18)?

God had promised to make Abraham the father of a multitude of nations (17:4). The list of Abraham's sons through Keturah, several of whom became nations, shows the fulfillment of that promise.

- In Abraham's final days, he gave gifts to his sons that were distinct from his inheritance. What did Abraham specifically give Isaac (vv5-6), and why was it important that he lived separately from his half-brothers (v11)?

While all of Abraham's sons received monetary gifts, only Isaac received God's blessing and the promise of the land.

- Abraham died having witnessed God beginning to fulfill His promises - his heart was full! What does it mean that Abraham died in a good old age (Gen 15:15); and what does it mean that Abraham was gathered to his people (v8)?

Being gathered to his people refers to joining his ancestors in death.

✦ Sent Together

- How has understanding God's concern for the nations shaped your view of missions?

Notes:

Attribute

Choose an attribute of God that you see in the passage and then complete the sentence below. If needed, there is a list of God's attributes in the back of the book.

✦ This passage reveals that God is _____ (attribute) by the way He _____.

✦ Daily Reading

- ___ Isaiah 41:8-10
- ___ Hebrews 11:13-16
- ___ Psalms 116:15-19
- ___ 2 Timothy 2:1-7
- ___ Psalms 105:8-11

Jacob and Esau

Genesis 25:19-34

✦ Share Together

- Share a time when you made a seemingly small decision that later turned out to have a greater impact than you anticipated.

✦ Study Together

- Consider that Rebekah, too, had been barren for 20 years. Compare Abraham and Sarah (vv16:1-4) with Isaac & Rebekah (vv19-22) in how they dealt with their barrenness.

Discuss the role that prayer has in a believer's life and the importance of waiting on the Lord's timing.

- Soon after Rebekah unknowingly conceived twins, the boys wrestled and struggled within Rebekah's womb (vv22-24). What was God's design in having two nations divide and come from Isaac's lineage? Why is it significant that the Lord told Isaac & Rebekah that the older would serve the younger (v23)?

God is showing Israel that He is not going to choose necessarily whom we think He is going to choose.

- From what we know in the text about Isaac and Rebekah's partiality, discuss what life would have looked like growing up for Esau and Jacob (vv27-28). How should we understand the brothers' rivalry and God's election in light of Paul's insights in Romans 9:10-18?

Clearly, Isaac and Rebekah had their own favorites, but as we know God is not partial and chooses to whom He will show mercy.

- Jacob's quiet and crafty demeanor was no match for Esau's appetite for immediate gratification. What exactly did Esau forsake, and how was that reflected in how "he ate and drank and rose and went his way" (v34)?

Esau minimized and took his blessing for granted; he missed the importance of making small decisions that have a significant effect, and he tried to obtain the good thing by giving up the greater.

✦ Sent Together

- How does knowing that God is not partial encourage you to share the gospel with others?

Notes:

Attribute

Choose an attribute of God that you see in the passage and then complete the sentence below. If needed, there is a list of God's attributes in the back of the book.

✦ This passage reveals that God is _____ (attribute),
and shows me that I am _____.

✦ Daily Reading

- ___ Ephesians 1:3-6
- ___ Romans 9:10-15
- ___ Isaiah 46:8-11
- ___ I Corinthians 1:26-31
- ___ Judges 6:11-18

Isaac and Abimelech

Genesis 26:1-35

✦ Share Together

- Share a time when you were trying to make life easier, but it ended up creating conflict.

✦ Study Together

- While there is a lot unknown about Isaac's life, what did God's affirmation of Abraham's covenant provide for Isaac (vv2-4)? What does God's promise to Isaac further expound on (vv4-5)?

Abraham's obedient faith in God was unwavering, leading to a generation that feared and obeyed God.

- There was a famine in the land and a temptation to sojourn in Egypt. Discuss the similarities in the life trials of Isaac and Rebekah to those of Abraham and Sarah (vv6-11). What role do trials have in the believer's life (James 1:2-4 & 12)?
- Isaac desires to trust in God's promises and remains in Gerar. Consider Isaac's success and commitment to settle in Canaan (vv12-16). What is the significance of Isaac digging out his father's wells (v15)?

Isaac prospers because he remains in the promised land, and by digging out the wells, he reclaims what God had given to Abraham.

- Fearful and envious of the Lord's blessings, tensions arose between Isaac and Abimelech (vv17-22). How did God work in Isaac's life to bring Him from a place of fear to faith (vv23-25)? How did God work through Abimelech, King of the Philistines, to provide a secure place for Isaac and his family (vv26-33)?

✦ Sent Together

- How does the Lord's mercy in your own life encourage you to share the gospel with others?

Notes:

Attribute

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✦ This passage reveals that God is _____ (attribute),
which reminds me to _____.

✦ Daily Reading

- ___ Isaiah 41:8-10
- ___ James 1:2-4
- ___ 2 Corinthians 4:15-18
- ___ Romans 8:26-30
- ___ Deuteronomy 31:3-6

Jacob Steals the Blessing

Genesis 27:1-40

✦ Share Together

- Can there ever be righteousness found in deceit?

✦ Study Together

- Regardless of God's will, Isaac still tried to bestow his blessing upon Esau (vv1-4). Discuss the meaning and purpose of the father's blessing to the eldest son. Why was Isaac resolved to try to bless Esau?

Even though Esau was a godless man who had despised his birthright and had married Canaanite wives (26:34-35), Esau was favored, the eldest son and representative man, so Isaac planned to give everything to him.

- Sin's source is selfishness rooted in pride and fear. What fear (or pride) was likely brewing in Rebekah's heart that led to her eavesdropping and devising such a cunning plan (vv5-17)? Why didn't Jacob, who is 70 years old, rebuke his mother for such a deceptive scheme?
- Rebekah and Jacob devised a plan to steal the blessing and successfully carried it out. As Isaac becomes suspicious of Jacob, how many opportunities to tell the truth did Jacob ignore in order to preserve his lie (vv18-29)?
- Consider that Esau laments that Jacob took away his birthright (v36); however, it was Esau who gave it up! Consider Esau's sorrow (vv34-38). What is the difference between worldly sorrow and righteous sorrow? Was Esau sincere and truly repentant for his actions?

✦ Sent Together

- How might seeing that God uses fallen people give us a better understanding of God's grace toward us and others?

Notes:

Attribute

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✦ This passage reveals that God is _____ (attribute)
by the way He _____.

✦ Daily Reading

___ Philippians 3:17-21

___ John 16:12-17

___ Hebrews 12:12-17

___ 2 Corinthians 7:9-11

___ Proverbs 4:20-27

Isaac Does What Is Right

Genesis 27:41-28:9

✦ Share Together

- Share an exciting time when future unknowns became more clear through relying on the Lord.

✦ Study Together

- Once Esau discovers he's been deceived, he plots a plan of revenge to get his blessing back (vv41-45), and as Jacob learns of this he flees to Laban. Discuss if Jacob got what he was really after in stealing the blessing.

In one sense, yes, he got the blessing. But now, no longer in the promised land, he had to flee from his brother and live as an indentured servant to a man who would deceive him.

- Isaac now rightly blesses Jacob and sends him away to Laban (vv3-5). Isaac gave specific instructions to Jacob on where to find a wife and where not to find a wife (vv28:1-2). Why is this important? Why hadn't Isaac given both sons this charge years before?

Isaac was the classic passive father who neglected to recognize the importance of finding a spouse to spur on righteousness.

- Consider that after 30+ years of marriage that Esau's marriage to two pagan wives was not pleasing to his father (vv8-9). Esau now believes that by adding another marriage, he would earn his father's approval. What ultimately kept Esau from seeking God's help?

Esau had a need, but he went about meeting that need in a worldly way, instead of seeking the Lord.

- At this moment, it's tough to imagine Jacob as the great patriarch of Israel; however, God is at work in Jacob's life. What indicators are in the text that God is working to bring about His purpose and will?

Until this point, Jacob has schemed his way through life. Now, for the first time, God has Jacob's attention as he works through his guilt and faces an unknown future.

✦ Sent Together

- The gospel is not limited to a specific group or culture. Discuss how no one is beyond the gospel's need and reach.

Notes:

Attribute

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✦ This passage reveals that God is _____ (attribute)
and shows me that I am _____.

✦ Daily Reading

- ___ James 1:20-21
- ___ Romans 9:16-18
- ___ Psalms 33:8-12
- ___ Colossians 3:23-25
- ___ Ephesians 1:3-6

Order Salutis

The Order of Salvation

Order salutis is Latin for “the order of salvation,” which refers to the sequence of conceptual steps involved in the salvation of the Christian. The sequence is meant to be logical instead of chronological; some steps occur sequentially while others occur instantaneously. What follows is a classically Reformed understanding of the way in which God saves his people.

Election

Before creation, because of His sovereign good pleasure, God chooses some people to be saved.

Calling

God summons people to Himself through the human proclamation of the gospel so they respond in saving faith.

Regeneration

God secretly & sovereignly imparts spiritual life to those who have been called.

Conversion

We willingly respond to the gospel call, repenting of sin and placing faith in Christ for salvation.

Justification

An instantaneous legal act of God in which he declares that our sins are forgiven and Christ's righteousness is ours.

Adoption

An act of God in which He makes us members of His family.

Sanctification

A progressive, lifelong work of God & man that frees us from sin and makes us more like Christ.

Perseverance

All those who are justified will be kept by God's power and persevere as Christians to the end of their lives.

Glorification

God will finally remove all trace of sin from the Christian and give him a resurrection body.

Attributes of God

Attentive

God hears and responds to the needs of his children.

Compassionate

God cares for His children and acts on their behalf.

Creative

God is the source of all creation — the power that brings new things into being and keeps everything growing and changing.

Deliverer

God rescues and saves His children.

Eternal

God is not limited by time; He exists outside of time.

Faithful

God always keeps His promises.

Forbearing

He is patient and shows merciful restraint in delaying deserved punishment for human sin, which allows for repentance.

Generous

God gives what is best and beyond what is deserved.

Glorious

God displays His greatness and worth.

Good

He is good and does good. There is nothing in Him that is not good.

Gracious

He is kind in giving us gifts and benefits we do not deserve.

Holy

God is perfect, pure, and without sin.

Immanent

God is present in all of creation, while remaining distinct from it.

Immutable

God never changes. He is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

Impartial

His judgment and dealings with people are fair and without favoritism.

Incomprehensible

God is beyond our understanding. We can comprehend Him in part but not in whole.

Infinite

God has no limits in His person or on His power.

Jealous

God will not share His glory with another. All glory rightfully belongs to Him.

Just

God is fair in all His actions and judgements. He cannot over-punish or under-punish.

Kind

More than mere niceness or politeness; it is a deep-rooted grace that leads to His benevolence, goodwill and tender-heartedness toward creation.

Loving

God feels and displays infinite, unconditional affection toward His children. His love for them does not depend on their worth, response, or merit.

Merciful

God does not give His children the punishment they deserve.

Omnipotent

God holds all power. Nothing is too hard for God. What He wills He can accomplish.

Omnipresent

God is fully present everywhere.

Omniscient

God knows everything: past, present, and future—all potential and real outcomes, all things micro and macro.

Patient

God is untiring and long-suffering with His children.

Personable

He is not a human being but possesses a personality and He is rational and self-aware. The Lord has an intellect, emotions, and volition.

Provider

God meets the needs of His children.

Refuge

God is a place of safety and protection for His children.

Rescuer

God can deliver and save people from danger or hardship. He is a powerful protector who intervenes on behalf of those who call upon Him.

Righteous

God is always good and right.

Self-Existent

God depends on nothing and no one to give Him life or existence,

Self-Sufficient

God is not vulnerable. He has no needs.

Sovereign

God does everything according to His plan and pleasure. He controls all things.

Transcendent

God is not like humans. He is infinitely higher in being and action.

Trustworthy

Whatever God speaks or does is truth and reality.

Wise

God knows what is best and acts accordingly. He cannot choose wrongly.

Worthy

God deserves all glory and honor and praise.

Wrathful

God hates all unrighteousness.

