

**Beginnings – ORIGIN** *(Where did we come from?)*

- **Only Two Choices**
- **Realize the Significance**
- **Is it Faith or Science?**
  - LAB - Lookable, Accessible, Breakable
- **Guess at the Evidence**
- **Inspect the Evidence**
  - Universe = "Decay"
  - Age of the Earth = "Can't Say"
  - Origin of Life by Chance = "No Way"
  - Evolution of Species and Man = "Lacks Genes and Tweens"
- **No Compromise**

DON'T - Death, Orders of Creation, Names in genealogies, Ten Commandments refer to seven-day week

**Intent of Life – LIFE** *(Why are we here?)*

- **Love - GOD and MAN**
- **Increase - GROW**
- **Faithfulness - Time, Talent, Treasure**
- **Eternity – Past, Present, Future**

**Authority – POWER** *(Who's in charge?)* A God Who is:

- **Personal and Loving**
- **Omnipotent**
- **Wise and All-Knowing**
- **Everywhere and Eternal**
- **Righteous and Reliable**

**Standards – RULES** *(What are the rules?)* God's rules are:

- **Revealed supernaturally, not derived by reason**
- **Universal and apply to everyone, everywhere, all the time**
- **Loving**
- **Enforced**
- **Steadfast**

# Who's In Charge?

**Authority - The Ultimate P.O.W.E.R.**

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This question deals with the nature of whatever power we think is in control of the universe. Some think there is no god, that chance and random forces determine what happens. Others think that Mother Nature (natural processes) is in charge. Others think that there is a god, but the god they imagine is very different from the God of the Bible. **The God of the Bible is the True God.**

In this chapter I want to highlight a few of the attributes of the True God that help distinguish Him from other false gods and ideas. Like the rest of this book we'll just skim the surface of this topic, but I hope this will be helpful in contrasting the True God to the concept of god found in other religious beliefs and worldviews.

What we know about the True God is only what He has revealed to us. Since God is outside of creation we can't go to Him – He has to come to us. But He has revealed much about Himself. We'll look at a few names He gives to Himself and discuss some attributes He reveals to us.

But before we continue I want to point out four serious but unavoidable shortcomings of this approach to studying God:

***God is a unified being and can't be "dissected" for easy study.***

Despite all God has told us about Himself, we don't even begin to grasp Who He Is. When Moses asked how he should explain God to the Israelites, God said to just tell them "I AM" sent him. God is, and there is nothing to compare to Him.

***God is not like us, and we tend to view Him as if He is***

In Psalm 50:21 God rebukes the wicked by saying "*you thought I was altogether like you.*" We need to remember that we tend to try to understand God by comparing Him to us. That's understandable, but inadequate.

***God is perfect, and anything we don't "like" about Him simply reveals that we are NOT perfect.***

All of His attributes are perfect and are perfectly in harmony. We can't pick and choose which ones we like. As overwhelming as the individual characteristics of God are, GOD is infinitely more. His justice and His mercy, His grace and His wrath, all of it is just right. He is worthy of all our worship and praise and adoration and admiration. My goal here is simply to be ready to explain some notable characteristics of God that provide glimpses of His perfection.

***The ultimate purpose of our study is not to know about Him***

The proper purpose of studying God is to know Him in an ever-deepening relationship.

## God's Names

In the Bible God uses different names for Himself to reveal different aspects of His character. Our English-translation Bibles mask some of the variety in these names. Here are some of the more common names God has in the original texts that are all translated "Lord" in our bibles:

Jehovah-tsidkenu	"The Lord My Righteousness" - God is the one who makes us righteous (2 Cor 5:21)
Jehovah-m'kaddesh	"The Lord Who Sanctifies" - God is the one who sets us apart for His purpose (Rom 8:28-30)
Jehovah-shalom	"The Lord is Peace" - God gives us peace (Is 26:3-4)
Jehovah-shammah	"The Lord is There" - God is always with us (Psalm 139:1-12)
Jehovah-rophe	"The Lord Who Heals" - God is our healer and the Great Physician (Psalm 147:3)
Jehovah-jireh	"The Lord's Provision Shall Be Seen" - God is the provider for all our needs (Philippians 4:19)
Jehovah-nissi	"The Lord My Banner" - God is the banner that goes before us and we follow his lead (Ex 17:15-16, Is 13:2-4,11)
Jehovah-rohi	"The Lord My Shepherd" - God is our shepherd who continually watches over us and guides us (Psalm 23)

These and other names give us insight into how God wants us to view Him and trust Him. **He offers in Himself the things that our hearts most desire to have** – righteousness, peace, comfort, healing, provision, leadership, a meaningful purpose, and Someone to take care of us.

The POWER acrostic below covers some key attributes of God that can be memorized for ready comparison to the gods of other worldviews:

- **P**ersonal and Loving
- **O**mnipotent
- **W**ise and All-Knowing
- **E**verywhere and Eternal
- **R**ighteous and Reliable