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It was given to an audience who would have typically been those familiar with, and in alignment with, the content in the biblical documents. As such, they would already have experienced and been amazed by many of these truths.

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If you – the reader / listener – have not made it that far in your spiritual journey yet, but want to get a glimpse of what wonder, peace, and life awaits you, should you approach this God for a **relationship—then LISTEN TO and REFLECT ON and let this soak in ...** I assure you, there is **NOTHING** more desirable, fulfilling, enriching, peaceful, and **SUSTAINABLE** than knowing and experiencing this “surprising” God ...

# The Unexpected God

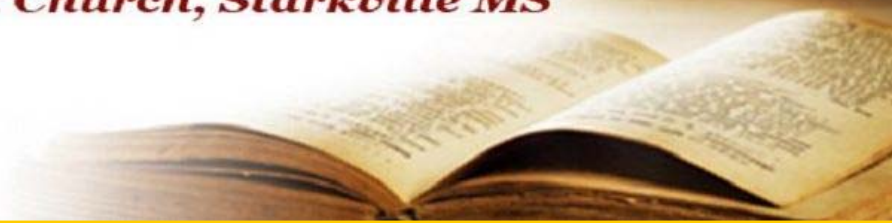
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This session will overview various aspects of God's character and values, highlighting the unimagined beauty and goodness of our God. Many of these themes in Scripture are not often the subject of our reflection, but they reveal a God beyond what we might expect Him to be. God is 'holy' and we know biblically that 'holiness' means 'difference'. **Our goal will be to see more clearly some of these 'differences' of His heart**, so that we might become more like His heart, and reflect His heart more in our lives, words, and relationships.

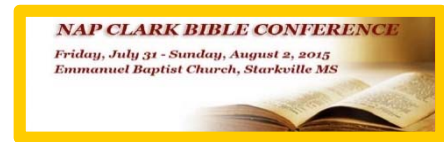
***NAP CLARK BIBLE CONFERENCE***

***Friday, July 31 - Sunday, August 2, 2015***

***Emmanuel Baptist Church, Starkville MS***



# The Unexpected God (Syllabus)



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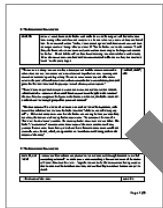
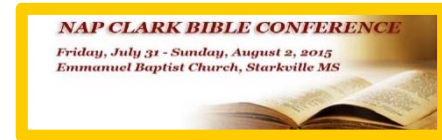
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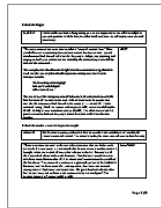
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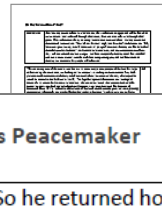
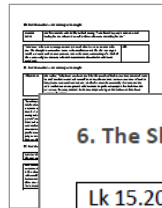
# The Unexpected God (Syllabus)



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## 6. The Shameless Peacemaker

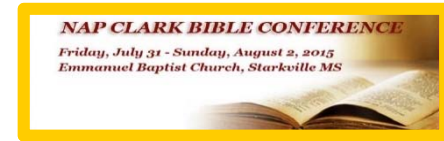
Lk 15.20	So he returned home to his father. And while he was still a long way off, his father saw him coming. Filled with love and compassion, he ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him. 21 His son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, and I am no longer worthy of being called your son' 22 "But his father said to the servants, 'Quick! Bring the finest robe in the house and put it on him. Get a ring for his finger and sandals for his feet. 23 And kill the calf we have been fattening. We must celebrate with a feast, 24 for this son of mine was dead and has now returned to life. He was lost, but now he is found.' So the party began.
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<p>"The scene is striking since even today, <b>a distinguished Middle Eastern patriarch in robes does not run, but always walks in a slow and dignified manner.</b> Running was viewed as <b>humiliating and degrading.</b> The man's unrestrained joy and affection—even to the point of humiliation before others—reveals God's overwhelming love and grace for the lost sinner and the joy experienced when a person repents."</p> <p>"There is here no qualified acceptance or cautious reception of the son but rather a wholehearted acceptance and an <b>uninhibited expression of delight</b> in the return of the son. Once he recognizes the figure in the distance as his son, <b>the father cares not a whit about the fitting dignity of his years and station!</b>"</p> <p>"The description of his return and welcome is as vivid as that of his departure, with several beautiful touches. Because his father saw him "while he was still a long way off" (v. 20) has led many to assume that the father was waiting for him, perhaps daily searching the distant road hoping for his appearance. This prompted the title of H. Thieliicke's book of Jesus' parables, <i>The Waiting Father</i> (New York: Harper, 1959). The father's "compassion" <b>assumes some knowledge of the son's pitiable condition, perhaps from reports.</b> Some have pointed out that a father in that culture would not normally run as he did, which, along with his warm embrace and kissing, adds to the impact of the story"</p>	<p>ZIBBCNT, NICNT, EBC</p>
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**Commentary  
for Later Study  
and Reflection**

# The Unexpected God (Topics)

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- God the Servant
- God who grieves
- The 'shameless' Peacemaker
- God the singer
- God the seeker - not waiting to be sought
- The 'self-conflicted' God?
- God the meek
- God, companion of the lowly
- Unbearable love
- Supernatural and contrarian strategy:
  - Winning through death, Rulers from peasants,*
  - Power through weakness, Effective wisdom through foolishness*
- The reverser of status, both real and imagined
- Praise from God?
- God the unfair giver?
- God who experiences 'delight'?

## God the Servant (1)

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☐ Luke 12:37

☐ “Be dressed for service and keep your lamps burning, as though you were waiting for your master to return from the wedding feast. Then you will be ready to open the door and let him in the moment he arrives and knocks. The servants who are ready and waiting for his return will be rewarded. I tell you the truth, **he himself will seat them, put on an apron, and serve them** as they sit and eat! He may come in the middle of the night or just before dawn. But whenever he comes, he will reward the servants who are ready.



## God the Servant (2)

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☐ Luke 22.27

☐ “Then they began to argue among themselves about who would be the greatest among them. Jesus told them, “In this world the kings and great men lord it over their people, yet they are called ‘friends of the people.’ But among you it will be different. Those who are the greatest among you should take the lowest rank, and the leader should be like a servant. **Who is more important, the one who sits at the table or the one who serves?** The one who sits at the table, of course. But not here! **For I am among you as one who serves.**

## God who grieves (1)

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- ❑ Ephesians 4.30
- ❑ “And do not **bring sorrow** to God’s Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, he has identified you as his own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption.

## God who grieves (1) – From the Commentary

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- ❑ J.B. Bond, in *Grace New Testament Commentary*
- ❑ "The Holy Spirit, the third member of the Godhead, indwells every believer (1 Cor 6:19–20). To grieve literally means to **bring sorrow or pain**. God the Holy Spirit experiences sorrow when Christians allow sin to dominate their lives."

## God who grieves (2)

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❑ Deuteronomy 5.29

❑ “The LORD heard the request you made to me. And he said, ‘I have heard what the people said to you, and they are right. **Oh, that they would always have hearts like this, that they might fear me and obey all my commands!** If they did, they and their descendants would prosper forever. Go and tell them, “Return to your tents.” But you stand here with me so I can give you all my commands, decrees, and regulations. You must teach them to the people so they can obey them in the land I am giving them as their possession.’ ”

## God who grieves (3)

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### ❑ Psalm 78.40

- ❑ “But all they gave him was lip service; they lied to him with their tongues. Their hearts were not loyal to him. They did not keep his covenant. Yet he was merciful and forgave their sins and did not destroy them all. Many times he held back his anger and did not unleash his fury! For he remembered that they were merely mortal, gone like a breath of wind that never returns. Oh, **how often** they rebelled against him in the wilderness and **grieved his heart in that dry wasteland**. Again and again they tested God’s patience and provoked the Holy One of Israel. They did not remember his power and how he rescued them from their enemies.

## The Shameless Peacemaker (1)

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❑ Luke 15.20

❑ “So he returned home to his father. And while he was still a long way off, his father saw him coming. Filled with love and compassion, he ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him. His son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, and I am no longer worthy of being called your son’ “But his father said to the servants, ‘Quick! Bring the finest robe in the house and put it on him. Get a ring for his finger and sandals for his feet. And kill the calf we have been fattening. We must celebrate with a feast, for this son of mine was dead and has now returned to life. He was lost, but now he is found.’ So the party began.

## The Shameless Peacemaker (2)

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- ❑ Colossians 1.20; Ephesians 2.13ff
- ❑ “For God in all his fullness was pleased to live in Christ, and through him God reconciled everything to himself. He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth by means of Christ’s **blood on the cross**.... Together as one body, Christ reconciled both groups to God by means of his **death on the cross**, and our hostility toward each other was put to death.

## God the Singer

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❑ Zephaniah 3.17

❑ “For the LORD your God is living among you. He is a mighty savior. He will take delight in you with gladness. With his love, he will calm all your fears. **He will rejoice over you with joyful songs.**



## God the Singer – From the Commentary (NICOT)

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- ❑ "The next portion of this verse may be called a “poem of personal love.” Three parallel lines each containing three phrases express **the deepest inner joy and satisfaction of God himself in his love for his people. Delight, joy, rejoicing, and singing on God’s part** underscore the mutuality of emotional experience felt by God and the redeemed....
- ❑ “That Almighty God should derive delight from his own creation is significant in itself. But that the Holy One should experience **ecstasy** over the sinner is incomprehensible:

'God breaking out in singing!

God joyful with delight!

All because of you.'...

## God the Singer – From the Commentary (NICOT)

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- ❑ "The mutuality of the loving response of Redeemer and redeemed is seen in the fact that some of the same terms used in the admonition to his people now describe the response of God himself to his people (cf. vv. 14 and 17). Zion is exhorted to sing (rānnî); he rejoices with singing (rinnāh). Jerusalem shall rejoice (śimṭî); he delights over Jerusalem with joy (śimṭāh). The whole scene depicts a grand oratorio **as God and his people mutually rejoice in their love for one another.**

## God the seeker -- not waiting (1)

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☐ John 4.23

☐ “But the time is coming—indeed it’s here now—when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The **Father is looking for** those who will worship him that way

## The Universe as Gift

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❑ Colossians 1:15-16

❑ “He [Christ] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For **by him** all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible... all things were created through him and **for him.**”

## The New Universe as Greater

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- ❑ “The entire universe is standing on tiptoe, yearning to see the unveiling of God’s glorious sons and daughters! For against its will the universe itself has had to endure the empty futility resulting from the consequences of human sin. But now, with eager expectation, **all creation longs for freedom** from its slavery to decay and to experience with us the wonderful freedom coming to God’s children. To this day we are aware of the universal agony and groaning of creation, as if it were in the contractions of labor for childbirth.” [Romans 8:19-22 (The Passion Translation NT)]
- ❑ “Then in a vision I saw a new heaven and a new earth. The first heaven and earth had passed away ... Now God himself will have his home with them ... He will wipe away every tear from their eyes and **eliminate death entirely**. No one will mourn or weep any longer. The **pain of wounds** will no longer exist, for the old order has ceased.” [Revelation 21]

## God the seeker -- not waiting (2)

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❑ Romans 10.20

❑ “And later Isaiah spoke boldly for God, saying, “I was found by people **who were not looking for me**. I showed myself to those who were not asking for me.”

## God the seeker -- not waiting (3)

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❑ 2 Samuel 14.14

❑ “She replied, “Why don’t you do as much for the people of God as you have promised to do for me? You have convicted yourself in making this decision, because you have refused to bring home your own banished son. 14 All of us must die eventually. Our lives are like water spilled out on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again. **But God does not just sweep life away; instead, he devises ways to bring us back** when we have been separated from him.

## God the seeker -- not waiting (4)

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- ❑ Luke 19.10 (and Parable of the Lost sheep)
- ❑ “For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost.



# The 'Self-conflicted' God? (1)

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## ☐ Hosea 11.1-11

- ☐ “But since my people refuse to return to me, they will return to Egypt and will be forced to serve Assyria. War will swirl through their cities; their enemies will crash through their gates. They will destroy them, trapping them in their own evil plans. For my people are determined to desert me. They call me the Most High, but they don’t truly honor me. **“Oh, how can I give you up, Israel? How can I let you go?** How can I destroy you like Admah or demolish you like Zeboiim? **My heart is torn within me,** and my compassion overflows. No, I will not unleash my fierce anger. I will not completely destroy Israel, **for I am God and not a mere mortal.** I am the Holy One living among you, and I will not come to destroy. For someday the people will follow me.

## No Pleasure in Death – of ANYONE (Ezekiel 18)

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- ❑ “Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked, declares the Lord GOD, and not rather that he should turn from his way and live?”
  
- ❑ “For I have no pleasure in the death **of anyone**, declares the Lord GOD; so turn, and live.”
  
- ❑ **Death will be the last-standing enemy:**  
“For he must reign until he has put all **his enemies** under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. (1 Corinthians 15:25-26)

## The 'Self-conflicted' God? (2)

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❑ Jeremiah 48.29-33

❑ “We have all heard of the pride of Moab, for his pride is very great. We know of his lofty pride, his arrogance, and his haughty heart. I know about his insolence,” says the LORD, “but his boasts are empty— as empty as his deeds. **So now I wail for Moab; yes, I will mourn for Moab. My heart is broken** for the men of Kir-hareseth. “You people of Sibmah, rich in vineyards, **I will weep for you** even more than I did for Jazer. Your spreading vines once reached as far as the Dead Sea, but the destroyer has stripped you bare! He has harvested your grapes and summer fruits. Joy and gladness are gone from fruitful Moab.

## The 'Self-conflicted' God? (3)

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### ☐ Intra-Triune intercession:

--Romans 8.26,27,34 and Hebrews 7.25; for Peter in Luke 22.31

“And the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. For example, we don’t know what God wants us to pray for. But the **Holy Spirit prays for us** with groanings that cannot be expressed in words. And the Father who knows all hearts knows what the Spirit is saying, for the Spirit pleads for us believers...Who then will condemn us? No one—for Christ Jesus died for us and was raised to life for us, and he is sitting in the place of honor at God’s right hand, **pleading for us**. ...

“Therefore he is able, once and forever, to save those who come to God through him. He lives forever **to intercede with God** on their behalf...

“Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift each of you like wheat. But **I have pleaded in prayer for you, Simon** that your faith should not fail. So when you have repented and turned to me again, strengthen your brothers.”

## God the Meek (1)

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☐ Matthew 11.29

☐ “Then Jesus said, “Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because **I am humble and gentle at heart**, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light.”

## Meekness – an Uncommon Virtue in that world (1)

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“Greek literature praised meekness in the sense of gentleness and leniency but not in the sense of self-abasement; **aristocrats disdained humility as a virtue**, except for the lowly. Jesus, however, identifies with those of low social status, a value more prominent in Jewish piety.”

## Meekness – an Uncommon Virtue in that world (2)

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"Human convention finds it **hard to envisage** as **“meek and lowly”** one who **can claim that everything has been entrusted to him by God** and who has just been declaring in forthright terms God’s judgment on those who have rejected his message. But in the kingdom of heaven **meekness is not incompatible with authority...** With those who are unresponsive and hostile to his message Jesus can be fierce, but to the “little children” to whom God has revealed the truth he is gentle and considerate, **“lowly” not in the sense of being unaware of his exalted status but of not using it to browbeat those under his authority.**"

## Meekness – an Uncommon Virtue in that world (3)

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"The marvelous feature of this invitation is that out of **his overwhelming authority** (v. 27) **Jesus encourages the burdened to come to him because** he is "gentle and humble in heart." Matthew stresses Jesus' gentleness (18:1–10, 19:13–15). Apparently the theme is connected with the messianic servant language (Isa 42:2–3; 53:1–2; cf. Zech 9:9, cited in Matt 21:5) that recurs in 12:15–21. Authoritative revealer that he is, Jesus approaches us with a true servant's gentleness. For the present his messianic reign must not be understood as exclusively royal."."



## God the Meek (2)

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❑ 2 Corinthians 10.1

❑ “Now I, Paul, myself urge you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ

## God , companion of the lowly (1)

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❑ Isaiah 57.15

❑ “The high and lofty one who lives in eternity, the Holy One, says this: “I live in the high and holy place **with those** whose spirits are contrite and humble. I restore the crushed spirit of the humble and revive the courage of those with repentant hearts.

## God , companion of the lowly (2)

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☐ Luke 7.45

☐ “One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to have dinner with him, so Jesus went to his home and sat down to eat. When a certain immoral woman from that city heard he was eating there, she brought a beautiful alabaster jar filled with expensive perfume. Then she knelt behind him at his feet, weeping. Her tears fell on his feet, and she wiped them off with her hair. Then she kept kissing his feet and putting perfume on them. When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, “If this man were a prophet, he would know what kind of woman is touching him. She’s a sinner!”

## Unbearable love

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❑ Ephesians 3.16-19

❑ “For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be **strengthened with power** through his Spirit in your inner being, **so that** Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, **may have strength** to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the **love** of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

## Supernatural/Contrarian strategy (1)

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- ❑ **Winning through death** (Colossians 2.14)
- ❑ “He canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross. In this way, **he disarmed** the spiritual rulers and authorities. He shamed them publicly by his **victory** over them **on the cross**.”

## Supernatural/Contrarian strategy (2)

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- ❑ **Rulers from peasants** (Luke 22.30)
- ❑ “And just as my Father has granted me a Kingdom, I now grant you the right to eat and drink at my table in my Kingdom. And **you will sit on thrones**, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

## Supernatural/Contrarian strategy (3)

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- ❑ **Rulers from peasants** (1 Corinthians 6.3)
- ❑ “Don’t you realize that someday we believers will judge the world? And since you are going to judge the **world**, can’t you decide even these little things among yourselves? Don’t you realize that we will judge **angels**?”

## Supernatural/Contrarian strategy (4)

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- ❑ **Power through weakness** (2 Corinthians 12.9)
- ❑ “Three different times I begged the Lord to take it away. Each time he said, “My grace is all you need. **My power works best in weakness.**” So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me. That’s why I take pleasure in my weaknesses, and in the insults, hardships, persecutions, and troubles that I suffer for Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong.



## Supernatural/Contrarian strategy (5)

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### ❑ **Effective wisdom through foolishness (1 Cor 1.18-31)**

❑ “The message of the cross is foolish to those who are headed for destruction! But we who are being saved know it is the very power of God. ... God has made the wisdom of this world look foolish. Since God in his wisdom saw to it that the **world would never know him through human wisdom**, he has used our foolish preaching to save those who believe. It is foolish to the Jews, who ask for signs from heaven. And it is foolish to the Greeks, who seek human wisdom. So when we preach that Christ was crucified, the Jews are offended and the Gentiles say it’s all nonsense. But to those called by God to salvation, both Jews and Gentiles, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God

## The reverser of status (1)

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- ❑ **The reverser of status, both real and imagined**
- ❑ Paul's *contra* rabbi/*contra* Greek quote in Galatians 3.28
- ❑ “There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus.

## Reverser of Deeply-Entrenched Values (Rabbi)

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"Just why these three couplets, and not others, were incorporated into the confession of early Christians is impossible to say. Perhaps their inclusion was a conscious attempt to counter the three bĕrākôt (“benedictions”) that appear at the beginning of the **Jewish** cycle of morning prayers:

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## Reverser of Deeply-Entrenched Values (Greek)

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"Analogous expressions of “gratitude” appear in **Greek** writings as well; for example, “**that I was born a human being and not a beast, next, a man and not a woman, thirdly, a Greek and not a barbarian**” (attributed to Thales, Socrates, Plato).

## Reverser of Deeply-Entrenched Values (Greek)

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So it may be surmised that in **conscious contrast** to such Jewish and Greek chauvinistic statements, early Christians saw it as particularly appropriate to give praise in their baptismal confession that **through Christ the old racial schisms and cultural divisions had been healed.**

## The reverser of status (2)

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❑ **The reverser of status, both real and imagined**

❑ Psalm 113.5-8

❑ “Who can be compared with the LORD our God, who is enthroned on high? He stoops to look down on heaven and on earth. **He lifts the poor** from the dust and the needy from the garbage dump. **He sets them among princes**, even the princes of his own people!

## The reverser of status (3)

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### ❑ **The reverser of status, both real and imagined**

❑ Children: Matthew 18.4; 19.13, etc.

❑ “So anyone who becomes as humble as this little child is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven. And anyone who welcomes a little child like this on my behalf is welcoming me.

❑ “One day some parents brought their children to Jesus so he could lay his hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples scolded the parents for bothering him. But Jesus said, “Let the children come to me. Don’t stop them! For the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to those who are like these children.” And he placed his hands on their heads and blessed them before he left.



## The reverser of status (4)

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- ❑ **The reverser of status, both real and imagined**
- ❑ 1 Corinthians 1.28
- ❑ “God chose things despised by the world, **things counted as nothing at all**, and used them to bring to nothing what the world considers important

## The reverser of status (5)

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- ❑ **The reverser of status, both real and imagined**
- ❑ James 2.5
- ❑ “Listen to me, dear brothers and sisters. Hasn’t **God chosen the poor** in this world to be **rich** in faith? Aren’t they the ones who will **inherit** the Kingdom he promised to those who love him?

## Praise from God? (1)

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❑ Romans 2.29

❑ “For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His **praise** is not from man but **from God**.”

## Praise from God? (2)

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❑ 1 Corinthians 4.5

❑ “Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of people’s hearts. At that time **each will receive their praise from God.**”

## God the Unfair Giver? (1)

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- ❑ Joel 2.25--undoing the damage of discipline
- ❑ “The LORD says, “I will **give you back** what you lost to the swarming locusts, the hopping locusts, the stripping locusts, and the cutting locusts. It was I who sent this great destroying army against you.

## God the Unfair Giver? (2)

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- ❑ Matthew 20.13 (Parable of Vineyard Workers)
- ❑ “He answered one of them, ‘Friend, I haven’t been **unfair!** Didn’t you agree to work all day for the usual wage? Take your money and go. I wanted to pay this last worker the same as you. Is it against the law for me to do what I want with my money? Should you be jealous because **I am kind to others?**’

## God who experiences Delight

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- ❑ Great is the LORD, who **delights** in the welfare of his servant!” (Psalm 35:27).
- ❑ His **delight** is not in the strength of the horse, nor his pleasure in the legs of a man, but the LORD takes pleasure in those who fear him, **in those who hope** in his steadfast love. (Psalm 147:10–11)
- ❑ but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I **delight**, declares the LORD.” (Jeremiah 9:23–24).

## Application (1)

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### **One: Giving God the 'benefit of the doubt'**

1 Thessalonians 5.18:

***Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.***

Proverbs 20.24:

***The LORD directs our steps, so why try to understand everything along the way?***

Proverbs 3.5:

***Trust in the LORD with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding.***



## Application (2)

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### **Two: Be imitators of God**

☐ Ephesians 5.1:

***Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are his dear children. Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ. He loved us and offered himself as a sacrifice for us, a pleasing aroma to God.***

## Application (3)

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**Three: Remember that He is the LIVING God** -- life, activity, passion, wisdom flows within Him, and from Him to and into us... No cardboard cut-out, no stone idol, no 'bundle of theological attributes'...

# The Unexpected God (Topics)

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- God the Servant
- God who grieves
- The 'shameless' Peacemaker
- God the singer
- God the seeker - not waiting to be sought
- The 'self-conflicted' God?
- God the meek
- God, companion of the lowly
- Unbearable love
- Supernatural and contrarian strategy:
  - Winning through death, Rulers from peasants,*
  - Power through weakness, Effective wisdom through foolishness*
- The reverser of status, both real and imagined
- Praise from God?
- God the unfair giver?
- God who experiences 'delight'?