



# In the Beginning, God... (Part 2)

Brownsburg Church of Christ

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PM Assembly



## Introduction:

"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." Thus begins the greatest story ever written. And what a powerful beginning. This beginning asserts some phenomenal truths that must govern and mold our worldview. We learned in our previous lesson that this statement denies atheism, polytheism, materialism, pantheism, and fatalism. But this statement is so much more than a negative denial of false worldviews. It is also a demand for some positive perspective regarding our relationship with God. This one statement is packed with purpose regarding how we should perceive and pursue our relationship with God. Since God is Creator, we must react in proper ways. In fact, this is Paul's argument in **Romans 1:18-32**. Because **Genesis 1:1** is true, we must respond in appropriate ways.

## Discussion:

### I. We must honor Him as God and give thanks.

- A. "For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened" (**Romans 1:21**, ESV). In this context, Paul asserts that the people he is talking about knew God because of the testimony of the creation itself. How much more will we be held responsible since we accept the testimony of **Genesis 1:1**?
- B. The Creator is God. He deserves honor. He deserves respect. He is not on our level. I have no desire to take away from the idea of God as friend that we saw in an earlier lesson. But I hope we understand that all friendships are not equal. When a servant is the friend of the king it is a wonderful, loving, comforting relationship. It means the servant can rely on the king to wield his power on the servant's behalf. It does not, however, mean that the servant can pretend to be king. It does not mean that the servant can be disrespectful or flip-pant. We must recognize that God is not one of us. Israel once had to be rebuked for making this mistake (**Psalms 50:21**). As **Isaiah 55:8-9** explains, God's ways and thoughts are above ours. We must honor Him.
- C. Part of this honor is giving thanks. But understand what giving thanks means. It is not merely a formality. It is an admission. If I thank you for something, I am asserting that you are the source of it. When I thank you for a gift, I am admitting you are the giver. When **Romans 1:21** says these folks did not give God thanks, it is saying they didn't recognize the source of all that is around them is God. **Proverbs 3:6** says we should acknowledge God in all our ways, then He will make our paths straight. This acknowledgement is saying God is the source. When we have accomplished something great, acknowledging God means recognizing without Him we could not have done it. As **James 1:17** says, every good and perfect gift comes from God. We must not take our blessings for granted but recognize the Creator as God, honoring Him and thanking Him.

### II. We must worship the Creator and not the creature.

- A. **Romans 1:25** explains that one big huge problem people have had is they worshiped the creature rather than the Creator. This has been a problem throughout history. They saw a connection between the sun and vegetation growth, so they worshiped the sun as the provider of blessings. The ancient Egyptians knew their lives were sustained by the annual flooding of the Nile, so they worshiped the Nile. Additionally, as man tried to envision the divine, instead of keeping God separate from the creature, they envisioned Him as one of the creatures. Look at ancient pictures of God and see them pictured as bulls, goats, alligators, humans. They may have had many horns, eyes, wings to demonstrate power or knowledge, but in the end they were merely powerful variations on the theme of creation.
- B. Worship is the declaration of reverence. It is the declaration that someone or something is worthy while the supplicant is unworthy. Bound up in worship is fear, trust, honor, homage, and love. **Genesis 1:1** means we must worship Yahweh. He is the one that put all of this here. He is the one that put us here. He is the source. He is the worthy one. He is the powerful one. He is the one that deserves fear, trust, honor, homage, and love. And yet, all too often we worship the gifts rather than the giver.
- C. Our ancient counterparts did this very literally. They loved to drink and party, and thus was born a god of such debauchery: Bacchus or Dionysus. They loved sex and thus was born the goddess of sex (though they said love): Venus or Aphrodite. We don't name our gods and goddesses, giving them personalities, building temples for them. But we do the same thing. God has blessed us with gifts of food, sex, entertainment, finances. Instead of seeing them as gifts that cause us to worship and praise God, we can get distracted and

pursue the gifts above the Giver. **Genesis 1:1** means everything else is a gift. Everything else should point us to God. Sex is not the creator. Food is not the creator. Money is not the creator. God is the creator. God deserves our fear, trust, honor, homage and love. God deserves our worship.

### III. We must obey the Creator.

- A. In **Romans 1:28**, Paul talked about those who didn't acknowledge God progressing on to do what ought not be done. In **Romans 1:29-31**, he listed a series of sins and disobediences. When Paul returns to this concept in **Romans 3:23**, he explains that everyone has done this. All have sinned and fallen short of God's glory. What makes all of this sin? God's righteous decree (**Romans 1:32**).
- B. We must grasp this demand of **Genesis 1:1**. God is the Creator. We must obey Him. As Christians, we often make a slight mistake. For us, the motivation to serve God usually and primarily comes from His plan of redemption. We are so humbled and overjoyed at the salvation God offers through the blood of Jesus Christ that we long to obey Him. As **I John 4:19** says, we love because God first loved us. Because of all this, we often mistakenly think that God the foundational reason God is owed obedience is redemption. That is not quite right. Certainly, that is a huge motivation. But the fundamental reason God is owed obedience is because He is the Creator. Whether or not God determined to save us, we owe Him allegiance as our Creator.
- C. A Creator has the right to govern His creation. A Creator has the right to mandate laws. A Creator has the right to dictate behavior. Consider **Psalms 104**. This psalm explains the greatness of God because of His creation. But notice something in this passage. He gave the earth foundations so it wouldn't be moved (**vs 5**). It hasn't been moved. When He rebuked the flood waters they fled (**vs. 7**). Mountains rose and valleys sank to the place God appointed for them (**vs. 8**). The waters stay in their appointed place so they will not flood the earth again (**vs. 9**). He goes on to talk about the springs that give drink to the animals and the grass that feeds them. In **vss. 19-23**, He talks about the moon that marks seasons and the sun that marks days. Interestingly, this psalm of praise for God's creative work ends with this: "Let sinners be consumed from the earth, and let the wicked be no more! Bless the LORD, O my soul! Praise the LORD!" (**Psalms 104:35**, ESV). If we are not careful, we may miss one of the main points of this psalm. Every bit of God's creation obeys Him. Every bit of God's creation does what God put it here to do. The only variable is us. We are the only ones that ignore God's will. Every other part of God's creation grasps that He deserves obedience. We must learn this as well. In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. Therefore, we must obey Him.

### IV. We must surrender to His judgment.

- A. It is perhaps because of this final reason that so many question **Genesis 1:1**. **Romans 1:32** says, "Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them" (ESV). This is the picture of God the Creator judge. Our modern culture doesn't like the idea of a judge. It doesn't like the idea of being accountable to someone other than self. But the one who created the world has the right to judge the world, punish the world, even destroy the world.
- B. **II Peter 3** highlights this. **II Peter 3:8-10** describes this coming judgment. Then in **II Peter 3:11-12**, Peter demonstrates this idea of judgment means something about how we should live. We need to surrender to God's judgment. That is, we need to live in view of the coming judgment. We need to live in view of the fact that it can happen at any time. If you get pulled over for a ticket or brought before a judge on various charges, you may be able to weasel your way out of it. You may be able to bat your eyes, cry, threaten, bribe and get the charges dropped. But when we stand before the Judge of all the earth, we will not be able to manipulate Him, cajole Him, bribe Him, entrap Him. He will judge based on His righteous judgment and we will simply accept whatever judgment He offers. How much better is it to listen to His judgment now and live accordingly? This is the message of **Ecclesiastes 11:9**. Walk in the ways of your heart. Follow whatever delights you. But always remember this. You will face the Judge. Surrender to Him now or surrender to Him later. You decide which is better for you.

### Conclusion:

"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." That is more than just a great opening line to an interesting book. It is packed with profound power to which we must submit ourselves honoring, worshiping, obeying, and surrendering to the Creator God it describes. How are you doing with that?