

God Gives Himself Genesis 1:1; Psalm 100

Introduction

Who is God? There are well over two thousand recognized deities that have been or still are worshiped today. The quest for that answer is not just an important question, it is the most important question anyone could ever ask. A. W. Tozer said it well when he wrote, “What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us. The history of mankind will probably show that no people has ever risen above its religion, and man’s spiritual history will positively demonstrate that no religion has ever been greater than its idea of God.”¹ So what I thought we could do as we get started this morning is to take a look at four of the world’s deities.

If you are the gassy type, you might want to worship the deity Crepitus who is the god of flatulence. If you are the type who likes to sleep all the time, then Morpheus is the god for you, for he sleeps in a cave surrounded by poppy flowers and is the god of dreams. And for those beer drinkers out there, there is Silenus, the god of beer, buddies, and drinking; he is described as being fat, bald, hairy, and drunk.

The last god that gave me a laugh is a god who goes by the name Bumba, an African creator god of vomit. I found out about Bumba on the website: www.godchecker.com, and I think the best way to describe Bumba is let godchecker.com do it for me:

In the beginning, all was dark. Then out of the darkness came BUMBA, a giant pale-skinned figure. He was not feeling well. In fact, he had not been feeling well for millions of years. He was lonely, and the unbearable solitude was making him ill.

Troubled by a ballooning bellyache, he staggered, moaned and vomited up the Sun. Light burst forth into the Universe – and he coughed up the Moon. The stars came next and then, with a tremendous effort, he threw up the planet Earth. This nauseating display was brought to a triumphant conclusion when, as an encore, he vomited forth nine animals, an assortment of humans, and a pile of diced carrots.

Exhausted from his labors, he sat and watched as the nine creatures multiplied. After a while, they had evolved into every living thing on Earth.... Then BUMBA’s three sons appeared. NYONYE-NGANA, CHONGANDA, and CHEDI-BUMBA added the finishing touches and thus the world was made. BUMBA spoke kindly to his human creations before ascending to Heaven, never to be seen again. So far as we know, his stomach has never troubled him since.

¹ A.W. Tozer. *The Knowledge of the Holy* (San Francisco, CO: HarperSanFrancisco; 1961), p. 1.

Now I share all of this in good fun, but the reality is that there are hundreds of religions out there with thousands of gods representing them. The majority of people in the world believe that there is at least one god, and they also understand and see that there is a creator who is responsible for all we see in the universe. Just by looking around, one can see the evidence of design and not random chance.

God Gave the Gift of Creation (Gen. 1:1)

God didn't vomit up the earth and then leave us humans to fend for ourselves; He created everything with design and intent. We learn from Genesis 1:1, "***In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.***" And God did it all in six days. How did God create the universe? He commanded it to come into existence and it obeyed:

"By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and by the breath of his mouth all their host." (Psalm 33:6)

"Let all the earth fear the LORD; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him! For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm." (Psalm 33:8-9)

"Praise the LORD... For he commanded and they were created." (Psalm 148:1, 5b)

Our solar system is one of many solar systems in our galaxy, which is about 100,000 light years in diameter; if you are not sure how big that is, it is the equivalent of about 587,000 trillion miles. Our sun is 332,776 times the size of our earth, and our sun is roughly one star among 200 billion in our galaxy. Our galaxy is very, very big; our galaxy is only one in about a million in the universe. Yet, in our galaxy, which is 1 in 200 billion, is our little planet placed in the exact place in our solar system, at the right orbital speed so that it can sustain all that lives on it, including the 7 billion people who call earth their home.

When you consider the great size of our universe, it is only natural to wonder: "If God created everything, why did He use up so much space? Why did God not just keep it simple by creating only one Galaxy?" Instead of asking those kinds of questions, maybe it would be more helpful to ask what it is that the Universe is actually saying about its creator. Perhaps the Universe only serves to show us just how small we are and just how big God really is. Consider Psalm 19:1-2, "***The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge.***"

I believe that God created the heavens and the earth because (1) it makes the most sense when compared to any other explanation for the universe, and (2) I believe God created all things out of a faith that God is real. What is faith? According to the book of Hebrews 11 faith is, "***...the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen***" (v. 1). Out of that faith we, "***understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible***" (v. 3).

For what purpose does creation serve outside the fact that it is big and beautiful? Some say that God created everything – especially human beings – out of a need for community. This sounds

like a plausible argument for why he created human beings who can worship him, after all... eternity is a very long time to be God. The only problem with this kind of thinking is that God existed for all eternity before He created time and placed His creation within time and space. Before He created anything, He existed within the fellowship of His Trinity: God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Within that first community, God was perfectly happy and content. Creation came about when God decided to go public with His glory.

God Gave the Gift of Human Life (Psalm 100)

If the heavens declare the glory of God, then the human body screams just how glorious He is, for every work produced by an artist says something about that artist in some small way. Consider the human body, which is made up of some 206 bones anchored to muscles in such a way to shield our vital organs. An intricate system of muscles specifically designed to pull our bones in such a way to make motion possible.

Giving life to our organs, muscles, and bones is our circulatory system, which is made up of about 60,000 miles of tubing so that blood can be carried throughout our bodies. All of which works in conjunction with our nervous system sheathed in our spinal cord all wired to an amazing computer that no human invention has even been able to touch when it comes to ingenuity.

Our human heart pumps about 10 pints of blood in the average adult body producing somewhere around 5,000 – 6,000 quarts of blood a day. Not to mention the human eye whose retina contains 125 million rods packed between five million bulbous cones that reflect black and white color. Or, consider the ear that can detect sound at the rate of 15 – 15,000 vibrations per second. God has designed a pretty amazing work of art! You are an original, and God's signature is written all over you. This is why the Bible states in Psalm 139, **“For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth”** (vv. 13-14).

We discover the uniqueness of mankind over the rest of creation in the first chapter of Genesis: **“Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth’** (Gen. 1:26). This is why the Psalmist sings: **“When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him”** (8:3-4)

One of the greatest acts of love that God has ever performed is the creation of a species known as “mankind” to know him and to be loved by him. Out of the generosity of God, he created you to know Him who has no need to improve upon himself. In creating you to know him, God has made available to you at no cost to you his infinite love, his infinite grace, his infinite mercy. His infinite justice, and to experience his infinite generosity.

God Gave the Gift of Himself

It is in Psalm 100 that I want to spend the rest of our time together because it is in this Psalm that we get to the heart of a generous God. In only five verses, we are given an explanation for our purpose on earth in the form of four imperatives (commands), but first the imperatives:

1. Make a joyful noise to the LORD (v. 1).
2. Serve the LORD with gladness (v. 2).
3. Know that the LORD, he is God (v. 3).
4. Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise (v. 4)

Why make a joyful noise? Why should we serve the LORD? Why should we know that the LORD is God? Why should we enter “his gates” with thanksgiving and his courts with praise? We are given four answers:

1. God made us (v. 3b)
2. God is good (v. 5a)
3. God’s love endures forever (v. 5b)
4. God is consistently faithful (v. 5c)

In verse 3, we are told that because God created us, we belong to Him, and thus we are His people. Nowhere does it ever say that God was morally obligated to make us, be good to us, love us, or remain faithful to us. Your existence does not require God to give anything good to you. Instead, God is morally obligated to damn you because He is holy and we have sinned and continue to sin against Him. We are the ones who have turned our back on him. We are the ones who have rejected him. We are the ones who look for ways to violate his commandments.

Conclusion

What the Bible says about the human condition is not encouraging; it is downright depressing. However, to understand just how generous God is, you have to understand how underserving of it you really are. In the Old Testament, we read of ourselves: “**Surely there is not a righteous man on earth who does good and never sin**” (Eccl. 7:20). In the New Testament, we discover how Jesus thought about the human condition: “**And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil**” (John 3:19). Why do people love the darkness instead of the light? Jesus told us why: “**What comes out of a person is what defiles him. For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person**” (Mark 7:20–23).

God in his generosity did what he had no moral obligation to do, he gave his Son, the second member of the Trinity to become like us, but without sin. In his perfect humanity, the Son of God generously gave himself to the wrath of God the Father in the place of sinners like you and me. This is why the apostle Paul wrote what he wrote in Romans 5:6-11,

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were

enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.
(Romans 5:6–11)

There is a phrase that you may have heard that goes something like this: “know your worth.” Knowing your “worth” has more to do with how you value yourself. Have you ever stopped to think about where we get the English word “worship” from? My encouragement to you is to do a word study sometime on the word, but for the sake of time, I will tell you that at its root, it boiled down to “Worth-ship.” Literally it means: “To attribute worth.” So, when we come and gather for our “worth-ship” service, who is it that we are attributing worth too? And since we are asking that question, a good follow-up question is this: “How do you attribute worth to a God whose worth is infinitely unmeasurable and yet infinitely complete?”

Here is my answer to why we gather and how attributing worth to God in all that we do is possible without adding anything to him or falling into the trap of self-worship. We attribute worth to God when we come to him as the only one who is able to make our joy complete. In other words, God created us out of his infinite generous character so that we can know him in all that he is, and by knowing him, we can experience his grace, mercy, holiness, power, wisdom, and presence, as a people who are loved by him. One theologian sifted the generosity of God down to a single phrase that ought to shock you out of any complacency or self-worship you have been guilty of recently; here is what he said: “If you are a Christian, God made you so that he could love you.”² Thomas Goodwin, the old Puritan, said of Jesus: “Christ is love covered over with flesh.”³

Do you understand what this means? What this means is that out of no moral obligation of his own, God moved heaven and earth so that you could experience his worth. And by experiencing and celebrating his worth, you find your joy and satisfaction as a human being. What this means is that in the giving of himself, God has not only made available to you the following gifts, but is pouring them out upon you in infinite measure. What is it that he is pouring out in infinite measure upon your head dear Christian? His grace, mercy, goodness, and love are yours because God is yours in the same way a father gives himself to his child. Permit me to close with something Ortlund wrote in his book that I am convinced you need to hear this morning:

‘Divine love is not calculating and cautious, like ours. The God of the Bible is unrestrained. If we are united to Jesus Christ, our sins do not cause his love to take a hit. Though our sins will make *us* more miserable, they cause his love to surge forward all the more. Every heart-stabbing poem, every story of rescue, every novel that evokes longings... and a thousand others who make the tears flow—all are an echo of the love behind all of human history. This love is the power that burst the created order into existence, and most supremely you, the pinnacle of creation. He created you in order to love you. He knit you together with his hands so that he could pull you into his heart.

² Dane Ortlund. *Deeper* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway; 2021), p. 70.

³ *Ibid*, p. 75.

Because God is a generous God, 1 John 3:1 is for you Christian: **“See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.”** Amen.