

Introduction If we are anything like the people of God from centuries past, we are certain to have current inadequate thoughts about God. Isaiah the prophet often approached or introduced his teaching time with the same humbling questions . . . Do you not know? . . . Have you not heard? What this helps us understand is that we are often uninformed, forgetful; distracted . . . we try to figure God out rather than maintaining our view of God from the scriptures. God wants us to know him, love him and rely on him. We too often end up with an understanding of God shaped more to our likeness. The dilemma that we face is that our quality of life – our joy and hope, actually depends on a clear and accurate understanding of God.

Are you sure that your hope, expectations and joy are anchored deeply in the God revealed to us in the Bible, or in a hybrid form of a god that you have developed over the years and experiences of your life? How sad and silly to discover that we are trying to honor a God that does not exist. The other side of the coin is true as well. Are you certain that the God you are rejecting or ignoring is the one true God of the Bible? You may find that the God you have fashioned can be ignored and rejected without consequence. How dangerous to ignore or reject the God who reveals himself in the scriptures. Accurate and clear thinking about God is the starting point for understanding and dealing with all aspects and challenges of your life.

Genesis is the book of beginnings. Over the next few weeks we will seek to transform our thinking and behavior at some foundational levels. What is God like? What are people like? What is sin? This morning we open our Bibles to page one to listen to God explain himself to us. What do you know about God? What have you heard about him? Check out and adjust your thinking as we study these verses together.

Read Genesis 1:1-2:3

It is important to note as we approach the early chapters of Genesis that the main message of the text is about God and not creation. Chapter one is a general description of the beginning of the universe without much detail as to how and when creation occurred. The need of our time is to know God far more than to know how we or our universe came to be. Genesis is not a science book. In chapter one, the word God appears 35 times as the subject of a phrase followed by an active verb. It is clear that a naturalist or materialist committed to randomness and self-existence has a completely different starting point than we do this morning as we open our Bibles and whether by assumption or faith, we acknowledge that there is something or someone greater than mankind who got this universe going. We believe the Bible is a trustworthy book. We expect and depend on the Bible to shape our thinking rather than the laws of science because we have been convinced that there is more to life than what is verifiable to a closed human system.

Therefore, this morning we do not teach or debate about young earth, old earth, 24 hour rotational days, long days, gaps, ages, big bang, macro evolution, intelligent design, DNA code, sequencing the genome or natural selection. The issue for us in the first chapters of Genesis is to listen and learn all we can about the God who made us and the universe we live in. Those lessons lead us to how we should live and relate to our creator God and each other. So with a healthy and grateful respect for science and scientists, especially those who invented air conditioning, jumbo-trons, plastic, cell phones, blood pressure medicine and chocolate cupcakes, we now turn our attention to a place no scientist has ever gone, the beginning.

The first chapter of the Bible teaches us four core truths about the God of the Bible. These truths must be among the first and most significant thoughts we embrace when thinking about God.

Knowing God . . . 4 core truth descriptions:

As our creator owner, God is . . .

1. Self existent.

Meaning: God is independent of all that everything else depends on. He is absolutely and totally other. God does not need anything. He is self sufficient, self determined, and self revealing. Everything in creation was God's idea.

Gen. 1:1 In the beginning God . . . plural God w/singular 'created'

Cmp. John 17:5, 24 Acts 17:24-25 Psalm 90:2

2. Powerful.

Meaning: God has no limits, all he wants to do he does. He wills nonbeing into being. What he announces and commands, happens.

Gen. 1:3, 6, 9, . . . and God said(8x) . . . let there be . . . and there was. And it was so. Creates, makes, forms

Cmp. Gen. 18:14 Jeremiah 32:17, 27

3. Purposeful.

Meaning: God does everything according to his desire, purpose and will. He exercises supreme dominion over all things. There is intentionality to all that he does. His thoughts shaped everything to the smallest part.

Gen. 1:4, 6, 9, . . . separated, gathered together, divided

Form to fullness seen in comparing day 1 & 4; 2 & 5; 3 & 6. From v.2 on, God brings form and function out of formlessness and then sustains it.

Cmp. Revelation 4:11

4. Good.

Meaning: God is the final standard for what is good. All that God does is worthy of approval. God gives all necessary gifts and functions to support life.

Gen. 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31 God saw that it was good.

Gen. 1:22, 28 God blessed them . . .

Cmp. Psa. 100:5; 106:1; 107:1; 104:19-26; Prov. 8:30-31

Connecting these core truths about God to our lives is essential. The message of the Bible draws us to these truths in specific ways and at crucial times in our lives before God. The truths of God's self existence, his power, his purpose and his goodness intersect with our lives daily in very real ways. These are the specific and practical ways that we develop inadequate and weak concepts about our God.

As our creator owner, God shapes our lives in the following ways:

1. God deserves your repentance and saving faith. Acts 17:22-34
2. God can be trusted in your suffering and trials. 1Peter 4:19; Isa 40:28ff; Job 38-42
3. God should be central to your perspective and worldview. Col. 1:16-18; Isa. 45:4-9ff
4. God is worthy of your joyful and unceasing worship. Psa. 19; 33; 104; Rev. 4:11

Read Isa. 40:28-31.

Repent of your small, old, tired thoughts about God. Humble yourself before him today. Cry out to your creator owner for grace, mercy and help.

Small Group Questions

1. Which is of greater concern to you . . . evolution is taught as fact in our public schools or that the seemingly majority of professing Christians have such a small view of God? Why?
2. How do you answer those who claim Christianity squelches the pursuit of knowledge and truth by expecting its adherents to simply trust God for what it does not understand? What is the meaning of Hebrews 11:3 and its connection to this discussion?
3. Review each of the 4 core truths from Genesis chapter one. Discuss meaning and supporting scripture. What questions, observations and issues come to mind when reviewing these truths? What old or wrong ways of thinking about God come to the surface?
4. Review the four life applications that an appropriate view of God shapes. Discuss meaning and supporting scriptures. How does an inadequate view of God impact these areas of life? How are you currently struggling in any of these areas?
5. Have a time of prayer and sharing where you testify to each other in praise and thanks giving for our great creator, owner God. Pray for each other in repentance and request that our hope and trust will be strengthened in God alone.