

GENESIS 1:1
AN INTRODUCTION TO GOD

“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.”¹

Allah? Vishnu? A god within? Jesus? Who is God? The Apostle has taught us, “Although there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth—as indeed there are many ‘gods’ and many ‘lords’—yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist” [**1 CORINTHIANS 8:5, 6**]. There can be only one true and living God. At the outset of the message we must confess a singular truth—all we know or can know concerning God is what He reveals. Since God is infinite and transcendent, we can know nothing about Him except that which he chooses to reveal.

My ideas and your highest thoughts shall fade to dim memories held briefly by those who know us. Nothing of our suppositions or speculations will remain. Such thoughts are humbling; such thinking confronts us with the necessity of making wise choices if we hope to have any lasting impact resulting from this life. I must carefully consider what I do and how I live; I must take care to attach myself to the eternal and the unending if I will make a lasting contribution. I cannot depend upon the latest fad to keep my memory alive. The name of Mary Quant is not even in contemporary history books; but she did make quite the fashion statement during the 1960s. Some years past a group of church members laughed heartily as a teen said that he considered the compositions of the Beatles to be “classical music.” Mr. Lennon’s assertion notwithstanding, the popularity of the Beatles never did eclipse that of Jesus Christ.

In order to introduce God, I invite you to begin at the beginning. Here, in the first verse of the Bible, God introduces Himself. This is a marvellous opportunity for us to discover something of the character of God as He reveals Himself to mankind. Turn in your Bibles to the first verse of the Word of God, **GENESIS 1:1**.

I KNOW THAT GOD IS OMNIPOTENT. Omnipotent is one of those big words which is poorly understood. It speaks of that which is “all powerful.” To say that God is omnipotent is to say that God can do anything. We meet an omnipotent God in the first verse of the Bible. There, we are informed that “God created the heavens and the earth.”

Omnipotence speaks of unlimited authority. Jesus claims unlimited authority. Before He ascended into glory before the watching eyes of His disciples, the Son of God stated, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me” [**MATTHEW 28:18**]. To the Jews who probed for any weakness He might display, He affirmed of Himself, “As the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. And he has given him authority to execute judgement, because he is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgement” [**JOHN 5:26-29**].

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In presenting Himself as the “Good Shepherd,” Jesus spoke of the authority He possesses. “I am the door of the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father” [JOHN 10:7-18].

Practically speaking, knowing that our God is omnipotent should lead us to seek great answers to prayer. We should live in the presence of the miraculous. I don’t mean that we necessarily seek to astonish and awe outsiders with our greatness, but I do mean that we should think great thoughts worthy of a great God. We should dream great dreams and seek great things in His power. How great are your prayers? What is your vision for this church? For your life? For your service before the Lord God?

William Carey, the English shoemaker who shook British Baptist from their lethargy and introduced the Christian Faith to the Indian subcontinent, initiated the great missionary movement which marked the English-speaking world. His watchword was, “Expect great things from God, attempt great things for God.” Convinced of the might of our God, he did accomplish great things in the Name of the Son of God.

If I had but one plea for you who hear this message, it would be that you do some great thing. If you struggle to find great thoughts to think, let me suggest some for you. Peter says, “The Lord is not slow to fulfil his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

“Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells” [2 PETER 3:9-13].

Since this is true, come join in building a great church to the glory of God where men and women will be saved. Seek to build in this town a church which embraces a thousand souls from this Peace country and where people come to faith daily. Join me in seeking to initiate a true revival which will burn across the Canadian prairie and transform our nation into a paradise of godliness. Unite your hearts with others who long to see the dawning of a new day, so that we may all see our children saved and our town changed as youth are saved from dissipation and destruction resulting from lack of righteousness. Dream a great dream of freedom from evil and freedom to worship.

I recall one of the songs which was current among the black churches of Dallas when I fellowshipped among those dear brothers. It was a lively tune which focused attention on God's omnipotence. The choir would sing:

**God can do anything, anything, anything;
God can do anything but fail.**

This is the God we serve.

I KNOW THAT GOD IS OMNISCIENT. Since God gave life to man, it must logically follow that God knows the heart of His creature. To say that God knows all things is to say that wisdom and knowledge belong to Him. One of the stimulating books in my library is a book by Arthur F. Holmes which is entitled "All Truth is God's Truth." There is a world of wisdom in that particular title. God knows all things, and since He knows all things, we who know God need never fear truth.

That is a glorious Psalm which the Psalmist penned and which we know as the **139th PSALM**. The Psalmist struggles with the character of God as he contemplates His divine knowledge. Listen, once again, to the familiar words of that glorious Psalm.

"O Lord, you have searched me and known me!
You know when I sit down and when I rise up;
 you discern my thoughts from afar.
You search out my path and my lying down
 and are acquainted with all my ways.
Even before a word is on my tongue,
 behold, O Lord, you know it altogether.
You hem me in, behind and before,
 and lay your hand upon me.
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
 it is high; I cannot attain it.

"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.
Your eyes saw my unformed substance;
in your book were written, every one of them,
 the days that were formed for me,
 when as yet there were none of them.

“How precious to me are your thoughts, O God!
How vast is the sum of them!
If I would count them, they are more than the sand.
I awake, and I am still with you.

“Search me, O God, and know my heart!
Try me and know my thoughts!
And see if there be any grievous way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting!”

[PSALM 139:1-6, 13-18, 23, 24]

Job thought he possessed great wisdom; and he was wiser than his comforters! Yet, when God revealed Himself to Job and asked but a few questions, Job changed his mind. Listen to the wounded man as he responds to God’s simple questions.

“Then Job answered the Lord and said:

‘I know that you can do all things,
and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.
“Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?”
Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand,
things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.
“Hear, and I will speak;
I will question you, and you make it known to me.”
I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear,
but now my eye sees you;
therefore I despise myself,
and repent in dust and ashes.’

[JOB 42:1-6]

There is a significant aside to this point which I would have you remember. ***Divine omniscience presupposes divine omnisapience.*** God knows all and He is all wise. That is a most powerful statement which the Apostle Paul penned in the Colossian letter. “I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you and for those at Laodicea and for all who have not seen me face to face, that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God’s mystery, which is Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. I say this in order that no one may delude you with plausible arguments” [COLOSSIANS 2:1-4].

Focus on the description of our glorious Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. In Him “are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” Wisdom consists of knowing Christ and in submitting our highest thoughts to Him that He might make us truly wise. If we fail in this, we are liable to being deluded with plausible arguments which have no validity.

I note a great truth arising from the knowledge that God knows me. God knows me, and yet He invites me to Himself. Hear again the gracious words of our Saviour. “Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” [MATTHEW 11:28-30]. Such knowledge should give the child of God great confidence. His knowledge is perfect, and those who reject His gracious invitation must know that there remains no place for them to hide. Surely, that knowledge strikes terror in the heart of the wicked, even as the righteous are comforted.

I KNOW THAT GOD IS ETERNAL. The phrase, “In the beginning” speaks of the advent of time. Prior to time, God is. When time shall end, God is. How marvellous is the manner in which the Risen Son of God introduces Himself to John on that glorious Lord’s Day. John was in exile on Patmos, where he worshipped the Risen Lord. Jesus revealed Himself to the exiled man of God. Oh, that He might reveal Himself among us!

The Lord spoke to John, with a voice like thunder. Of course, John turned at the sound of His voice. Listen to John as he relates what the Risen Son of God said to Him. “When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand on me, saying, ‘Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades’” [REVELATION 1:17, 18].

He is the Living One. He is alive forevermore. He is my God. He is the eternal God of whom Moses sang.

“There is none like God, O Jeshurun,
who rides through the heavens to your help,
through the skies in his majesty.
The eternal God is your dwelling place,
and underneath are the everlasting arms.”

[DEUTERONOMY 33:26, 27]

When Abraham worshipped at Beersheba, he planted a tamarisk tree as a symbol of longevity and “called on the name of the Lord, the Everlasting God” [GENESIS 21:33]. Glorious is the Name of the Lord our God, for He is the Everlasting God. How long until we discover the truth of Isaiah’s words to God’s ancient people?

“Why do you say, O Jacob,
and speak, O Israel,
‘My way is hidden from the Lord,
and my right is disregarded by my God?’
Have you not known? Have you not heard?
The Lord is the everlasting God,
the Creator of the ends of the earth.
He does not faint or grow weary;
his understanding is unsearchable.
He gives power to the faint,

and to him who has no might he increases strength.
Even youths shall faint and be weary,
and young men shall fall exhausted;
but they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles;
they shall run and not be weary;
they shall walk and not faint.”

[ISAIAH 40:27-31]

I KNOW THAT I OWE GOD HONOUR AND GLORY. Since God is Creator, mighty and magnificent beyond my ability to imagine, He deserves honour and glory. I am always humbled to discover that the employment of the saints in eternity is worship of God. Perhaps it is necessary to note what worship is so that you will understand why I am humbled. Worship is the ascription of worth to Him who is worthy. To worship God, is to render to Him the honour and glory which are due Him

Reading the Book of Revelation, I discover that worship and praise are constant in eternity—this is the eternal employment of the people of God. I am convinced that we are to prepare ourselves on earth for an eternity of worship and praise. Those who will not worship now shall not be suited to worship in eternity. In Heaven, the angels of glory worship the True and Living God, saying,

“Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty,
who was and is and is to come!”

And as the angels give glory and honour and thanks to God, the redeemed of all the ages fall down before him. Casting their crowns before His throne, they glorify Him, saying,

“Worthy are you, our Lord and God,
to receive glory and honour and power,
for you created all things,
and by your will they existed and were created.”

The angels of heaven, together with the whole of the redeemed shall sing:

“Worthy are you to take the scroll
and to open its seals,
for you were slain, and by your blood
you ransomed people for God
from every tribe and language and people and nation,
and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God,
and they shall reign on the earth.”

Those who overcome are authorised to sing the Song of Moses before the throne of God.

“Great and amazing are your deeds,
O Lord God the Almighty!
Just and true are your ways,
O King of the nations!
Who will not fear, O Lord,
and glorify your name?
For you alone are holy.
All nations will come
and worship you,
for your righteous acts have been revealed.”

[REVELATION 4:8, 11; 5:9, 10; 15:3, 4]

I KNOW THAT GOD HOLDS THE POWER OF LIFE AND DEATH. Because God is powerful and mighty, I am compelled to confess that He holds the power of life and death over all men. Such knowledge should lead all mankind to humble submission before the Lord God. Unfortunately, preachers in this day late in the period known as “The Last Days” have so emphasised the love of God that the holiness of God is virtually unknown.

Indeed, our God is a God of love, but honesty compels me likewise to remind you that He is a holy God. On this basis, we read the words which Peter penned. “Prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behaviour; because it is written, ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy’” [1 PETER 1:13-16 NASV].

Long years ago, Isaiah warned Israel against fearing what others fear. “Do not call conspiracy all that this people calls conspiracy, and do not fear what they fear, nor be in dread. But the Lord of hosts, him you shall regard as holy. Let him be your fear, and let him be your dread” [ISAIAH 8:12, 13]. The words suggest caution akin to the caution which Jesus issued to His people. “Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell” [MATTHEW 10:28]. On this basis, Jesus encourages His servants to cease living a life of fear, calling them instead to acknowledge Him. He says, “Everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven” [MATTHEW 10: 32, 33]

This divine saying concerning a life without fear is also preserved in LUKE 12:4-7. “I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after that have nothing more that they can do. But I will warn you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has authority to cast into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him! Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? And not one of them is forgotten before God. Why, even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not; you are of more value than many sparrows.”

If I fear God, knowing that He holds the power of life and death, I need fear no man. Teens wear tee shirts which proclaim their lack of fear. I tell you that the one who is fearless in this world is a Christian who refuses to bow to mere mortals. The one who stands unbowed is the child of God who knows God and lives in His presence. This is the fearless individual. Would that more of the professed people of God were fearless!

It is a shocking word which God pronounces through His servant Moses.

“See now that I, even I, am he,
and there is no god beside me;
I kill and I make alive;
I wound and I heal;
and there is none that can deliver out of my hand.
For I lift up my hand to heaven
and swear, As I live forever,
if I sharpen my flashing sword
and my hand takes hold on judgement,
I will take vengeance on my adversaries
and will repay those who hate me.
I will make my arrows drunk with blood,
and my sword shall devour flesh—
with the blood of the slain and the captives,
from the longhaired heads of the enemy.”

[DEUTERONOMY 32:39-42]

I KNOW THAT I AM RESPONSIBLE TO GOD. God has given me life; and to Him I must give an accounting. The Preacher wrote such a dark book in Ecclesiastes. At the end of that dark collection, the Preacher presents a sobering thought which each of us would do well always to remember. Consider his words now.

“Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come and the years draw near when you will say, ‘I have no delight in them’; before the sun and the light, the moon and the stars are darkened, and clouds return after the rain; in the day that the watchmen of the house tremble, and mighty men stoop, the grinding ones stand idle because they are few, and those who look through windows grow dim; and the doors on the street are shut as the sound of the grinding mill is low, and one will arise at the sound of the bird, and all the daughters of song will sing softly. Furthermore, men are afraid of a high place and of terrors on the road; the almond tree blossoms, the grasshopper drags himself along, and the caperberry is ineffective. For man goes to his eternal home while mourners go about in the street. Remember Him before the silver cord is broken and the golden bowl is crushed, the pitcher by the well is shattered and the wheel at the cistern is crushed; then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it. ‘Vanity of vanities,’ says the Preacher, ‘all is vanity’” [ECCLESIASTES 12:1-8 NASV]!

I KNOW THAT GOD WILL RECEIVE ME. God created me for His purpose and for His glory. His holy desire is that I will glorify Him through coming to Him in faith. Karl Barth, the noted Swiss theologian, following a lecture at the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C., was interviewed by a newspaper reporter. His interlocutor asked, among other questions, “What is the greatest thought you have ever held?” Without hesitation, the great and noted theologian said, “Jesus loves me, this I know; for the Bible tells me so.” Though I do not hold to Bathian theology, I admire that statement.

The God who gives me my being, will also give me life and light. I must receive it, for it is offered as a gift and not as the consequence of anything I deserve or obtain through my own strength. Life in Christ speaks not only of the absence of death, though that is true, but it speaks of a new quality of life in which I can both know God and be known by God. It speaks of freedom to be all that I wish to be and it speaks of sharing the very life of God with Him.

Jesus said, “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand. I and the Father are one” [JOHN 10:27-30].

Jesus gives life. As He prayed His high priestly prayer before His passion, Jesus said, “Father, the hour has come, glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all flesh to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent” [JOHN 17:1b-3]. Though “the wages of sin are death,” yet “the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” [see ROMANS 6:23].

How desperately we need the admonition of the Apostle John in these days! “Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us. But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you all have knowledge. I write to you, not because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and because no lie is of the truth. Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son. No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also. Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you too will abide in the Son and in the Father. And this is the promise that he made to us—eternal life.

“I write these things to you about those who are trying to deceive you. But the anointing that you received from him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone should teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about everything—and is true and is no lie, just as it has taught you—abide in him” [1 JOHN 2:18-27].

That eternal life is given to all who receive Jesus as Lord of life. Consider carefully these words which the Apostle penned long years ago. They apply to this day. “While we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly...” Again, Scripture states that “God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” [ROMANS 5:6, 8].

Therefore, the call of God, issued through this messenger and the Word of God is, “If you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ believing in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be set free. For with the heart one believes resulting in a right standing before the Father, and with the mouth one confesses and is set free.” The Apostle concludes by citing Joel, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” [ROMANS 10:9, 10, 13 FREE TRANSLATION].

Be saved today. Amen.