

GOD IS YOUR CREATOR, SO WHAT?

In the beginning God created . . .

And God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light.

And God said, 'Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters,' . . . and it was so.

And God said, 'Let the waters below the heavens be gathered into one place, and let the dry land appear'; and it was so.

And God said, 'Let the earth sprout vegetation,' . . . and it was so.

And God said, 'Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night, and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years' . . . and it was so.

And God said, 'Let the waters teem with swarms of living creatures, and let the birds fly above the earth . . . '

And God said, 'Let the earth bring forth living creatures after their kind,' . . . and it was so.

And God said, 'Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness,' . . . and God created man in his own image.

And God saw all that he had made, and behold, it was very good.

Thus the heavens and the earth were completed, and all their hosts.¹

Many Christians dismiss further study of creation after a thorough treatment of evolution versus creation. This is a mistake. Not only is God *the* creator, God is *our* creator. Not only has God brought us into existence, because of his grand creative act, we have a meaningful relationship to our maker. Because God is our creator, we draw our life, our total being, and our entire existence from him. Because God is our creator, we must revere, worship, and glorify him. And because God is our creator, we must return to God and give an account for our actions.

The apostle Paul describes the first of these three implications of creation when he tells the Athenians:

¹From Genesis, chapters 1 and 2, *New American Standard Bible* (NASB).

David W Fletcher, *Firm Foundation* 96, no. 4 (January 23, 1979): 5, 10
All Rights Reserved / Unauthorized Electronic Publishing Prohibited / www.davidwfletcher.com

The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all men life and breath and everything. . . . He is not far from each one of us, for “In him we live and move and have our being”; as even some of your poets have said, “For we are indeed his offspring.”²

Paul’s audience, Stoics and Epicureans, held erroneous views about God. The Stoics thought that “Fate” controlled everything. The Epicureans entertained the idea that the gods were far removed from humans and took no interest in human affairs. Paul answers both false notions by proclaiming that the creator of all things is Lord of both *heaven* and *earth*. Since God is Lord of heaven and earth, he is greater than the pagan gods that dwell in small temples fashioned by human hands. And God is not served by human hands. Pagan worshipers set offerings of food before the idols of their gods and believed the gods would descend and eat these offerings. But Jehovah God does not need the assistance of humans to exist. Our God needs nothing. Yet God gives us everything. God “gives to all men life and breath and everything. . . . ‘In him we live and move and have our being.’”

This does not mean that “a little bit of God exists in each of us.” Nor does it suggest that human beings sprang forth from the essence or being of God. God is a distinct being—separate and apart from humans but not unconcerned about humans. Humans are distinct beings—separate and apart from God in essence though not independent from God in being or existence. What Paul states to these Greeks at Athens is this: Human beings (dependent creatures) rely wholly on God (an independent being) for existence. Without God, we would not and could not be. We

²Acts 17:24-28, *Revised Standard Version* (RSV).

David W Fletcher, *Firm Foundation* 96, no. 4 (January 23, 1979): 5, 10
All Rights Reserved / Unauthorized Electronic Publishing Prohibited / www.davidwfletcher.com

live, we move, and we have our being only because God “according to the counsel of his will”³ chose to create us.

This harmonizes perfectly with the doctrine of creation set forth in the opening chapters of Genesis. From the very beginning, God abundantly supplied mankind with all things necessary for happy existence (for example, the breath of life, a beautiful garden, trees pleasing to the eyes, plants good for food, rivers for water, animals to care for, and a mate for help). As with Adam, God “gives to all men life, and breath, and everything.” Because God is our creator, we draw our life, our total being, and our entire existence from him.

Secondly, because God is our creator, we must revere, worship, and glorify him and him alone. In his speech at the Areopagus, Paul quotes from the Greek poet Aratus who said, “We are indeed his offspring.” Using this quotation for his remarks, Paul states:

Being then God’s offspring, we ought not to think that the Deity is like gold, or silver, or stone, a representation by the art and imagination of man. The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all men everywhere to repent.⁴

Paul’s argument is this: Children resemble their parents. Since we are God’s children, it is absurd to think that God is wood, metal, or stone. You are not wood, metal, or stone; so why do you believe that God, your father, is wood, metal, or stone? Again, from the fact of creation, Paul corrects a popular misconception about God and a false practice based on that misconception. Genesis 1:26 teaches, “God created man in his own image.” And although

³See Ephesians 1:11, *English Standard Version* (ESV).

⁴Acts 17:29-30, RSV.

man's nature dimly reflects the nature of God, our likeness proclaims his *true* nature. God is spirit.⁵ Man is also a spirit.⁶ Man's spiritual nature reflects God's true spiritual essence. God is also true.⁷ Man instinctively desires the truth. No one, not even a liar, enjoys receiving deliberate falsehoods from others. All of us possess a conscience, a sense of *ought* and *ought not*, that defines right from wrong and seeks that which is right. Man's preference for the true reflects God's truthfulness.

So we must not approach God in worship as though he were stone or wood or even as though he were like a human being (that is, having arms, hands, legs, or feet). We must approach God in worship "in spirit and truth" (that is, according to God's very nature).⁸ Our homage to our maker must originate from our innermost being (spirit) and must express itself in actions set forth in God's revelation to mankind (truth). Any service lacking either in the honest conviction of its participant or the truth of God's word is not correct. It purports to honor God, but by its very nature cannot honor him, since it distorts the true essence of God as revealed in the human beings he created.

For example, the person who sings boastfully, "O How I Love the Lord," who has no honest desire to better serve the creator and who knows that he or she will produce no true effort

⁵See John 4:24.

⁶See 1 Corinthians 5:5.

⁷See Isaiah 65:16.

⁸See John 4:24, ESV.

David W Fletcher, *Firm Foundation* 96, no. 4 (January 23, 1979): 5, 10
All Rights Reserved / Unauthorized Electronic Publishing Prohibited / www.davidwfletcher.com

to obey, cannot please God. That worship is just the vocalization of musical tones by an outward, physical tabernacle; the spirit is not involved. That worship portrays a God of flesh and bones or a God inconsistent with his own nature. That worship mocks the spiritual, unified essence of our creator. Consider another example. The person who prays to Mary, no matter how sincere he or she might be, cannot please God. That worship elevates human beings to the level of God, and it gives a human being the honor and reverence due to God alone. That worship portrays a God no greater than humans and scoffs at the exalted, distinct, transcendent essence of our creator. To be pleasing to God we must honor both his spiritual and truthful nature as revealed in the human beings he created. Because God is our creator, we must revere, worship, and glorify him and him alone.

Thirdly, because God is our creator, we must return to God and give an account for our actions. Paul stressed that the Athenians should repent, because God “has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed.”⁹ These Gentiles to whom Paul spoke had no idea of a final judgment. Their deities engaged in every human vice and to even a greater extent than most humans. So, naturally, how could a host of unrighteous deities enact a righteous judgment? Paul therefore reveals to these Stoics and Epicureans the righteous God, the God of eternal absolutes. Paul declares to them the God who would judge the world in righteousness through Jesus Christ.

⁹Acts 17:31, RSV.

That this idea of a righteous judgment is implied in creation is undeniable. From the beginning, mankind possessed a moral code or law. God instructed mankind to have dominion over all other creatures, to populate the earth, and to abstain from eating the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.¹⁰ And, from the beginning, human beings also possessed the power to comply with or reject the moral code given by the creator. This power of choice made humans directly responsible to the creator.¹¹ As you well know, Satan used the opportunity of Eve's free will to approach her and destroy her confidence in and her right belief about God. Satan depicted God as mean, cruel, and unkind. "God is afraid that you will become like him; that is why he is restricting you."¹² Adam and Eve, the father and mother of mankind, chose to believe this lie and rejected God's guidelines. This action pricked the first pair's sense of moral obligation and fear drove them to hide from God. Their ultimate penalty was death.

We too shall die someday. At that time, the body shall return to the dust from where it was made, and the spirit shall return to God who gave it.¹³ As Adam and Eve stood before the righteous God to receive judgment, we too shall one day stand before our righteous creator and receive judgment concerning our choices in regard to our maker's moral code. Because God is our creator, we must return to God and give an account for our actions.

¹⁰See Genesis, chapters 1 and 2.

¹¹See Genesis, chapter 3.

¹²Paraphrase, Genesis 3:5.

¹³See Ecclesiastes 12:7.

David W Fletcher, *Firm Foundation* 96, no. 4 (January 23, 1979): 5, 10
All Rights Reserved / Unauthorized Electronic Publishing Prohibited / www.davidwfletcher.com

God is your creator, so what? This grand idea about creation answers life's three basic questions: Where did I come from? Why am I here? Where am I going? The answer is: God! We came from God. "In him we live and move and have our being." We are here for God. "We are indeed his offspring," and we are here to give glory to him and him alone. And, we are going back to God, because God has appointed a day on which he will judge the world by the man Jesus Christ.¹⁴ As we have received his blessings, let us acknowledge his purpose in our lives. God is *the* creator! God is *our* creator!

¹⁴See Acts 17:31.