



God's World, Our Responsibility

In the Beginning God...

Adult Bible Study Hour, January 8, 2012 - Mark Bickel

TEACHING NOTES

Intro:

{5 min.}

Isaiah 40:21-26

Do you not know? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning?
Have you not understood since the earth was founded?
He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth, and its people are like grasshoppers.
He stretches out the heavens like a canopy, and spreads them out like a tent to live in.
He brings princes to naught and reduces the rulers of this world to nothing.
No sooner are they planted, no sooner are they sown, no sooner do they take root in the ground,
than he blows on them and they wither, and a whirlwind sweeps them away like chaff.

“To whom will you compare me? Or who is my equal?” says the Holy One.
Lift your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these?
He who brings out the starry host one by one, and calls them each by name.
Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing.

Psalms 24:1-2

The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it;
for he founded it upon the seas and established it upon the waters.

PRAY

- This is the start of a **5-week series** looking at how to be God stewards of all God has given
- In the adult Bible Study times we want to consider some of the practical implications of the Scriptures to our understanding of what it means that we are responsible creatures in God's World

Handouts

- **Church** – Bulletin Insert has place for sermon notes, memory verse, some passages/questions for further study
- **Bible Study Handout** – class notes, appendixes / books / resources / questions for further study
- **Church Web Site** – Copies of above, as well as audio and teaching notes from class

Today

- Series title: God's World, Our Responsibility
- Next 4 weeks talk mostly about our responsibility ... Today focus on "God's World"
- I want to ask 4 questions:

1. Who Do We Serve? (10 min)

2. How Do We Know God exists? {30 min}

- o Most fundamental question – before we claim it is God's world, we must ask "is there a God?"

3. Who is God? {10 min}

- o Related question – If there is a God, how do I know what is true about him?

4. Why Does God Matter? {20 min}

- o Why does it matter? Sure God is important to religion, but can't we all talk about issues like time, money, the environment, even living life apart from talking about God?

{note: some of this similar to several parts of the Crossroads worldview series from this past fall – you can hear some of these topics more in depth at gracebfc.org/crossroads}

1) Who Do We Serve?

Being a Good Steward

{ 5+ min}

Definition of STEWARD (<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/steward>)

- one employed in a large household or estate to manage domestic concerns (as the supervision of servants, collection of rents, and keeping of accounts)
- a fiscal agent
- one who actively directs affairs : manager

Stewardship (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stewardship>)

An ethic that **embodies responsible planning and management of resources**. The concept of stewardship has been applied in diverse realms, including with respect to environment, economics, health, property, information, and religion... Historically, stewardship was the responsibility given to household servants to bring food and drinks to a castle dining hall. The term was then expanded to indicate a household employee's responsibility for managing household or domestic affairs. Stewardship later became the responsibility for taking care of passengers' domestic needs on a ship, train and airplane, or managing the service provided to diners in a restaurant. The term continues to be used in these specific ways, but it is also used in a more general way to refer to **responsibility to take care of something belonging to someone else**.

Example: Lord of the Rings, Steward of Gondor

- Ruled under the king, for the king, when the king away ... and in the absence of the king
- *Asked by his son [Boromir](#) how long must pass before a Steward could become King, if the King did not return, [Denethor II](#) replied: " ten thousand years would not suffice."*

Jesus' Teaching

- Numerous parables about servants and masters
 - Wicked servants try to take vineyard
 - Faithful, and Unfaithful Servants in the use of talents given
 - Master pay servants hired late in the day same as those hired earlier
 - Servant who brings master food after long day in field just doing his duty
- One day we would like to hear "Well done, good and faithful servant"

Question: What makes someone a Good Steward?

Knowing the Master You Serve

{ 5- min }

three things every steward needs to know:

- **Skills of the Job** – How to manage house, etiquette, accounting, stock market, country ...
 - *Next 4 weeks look at skills of schedule, finances, environment and life*
- **Knowledge of the Master's Plan / Estate** – know house, portfolio, desires
 - *Next 4 weeks look at a Biblical understanding of time, money, creation, and heart*
- **Relationship with the Master** – Know him, understand him, anticipate desires, love him.

Example: Radar on Mash respond to Potter's desire before he even asks

- *Start today with foundation in who this Master is,*
- *End in February with a look at loving Him with all we are*

So if we are to be good stewards of time, money, earth, life ... we need to know who we serve

*Which leads us to the most fundamental of questions, does God exist
In church we often assume this ... but why is it that we believe in God in the first place?*

2) How Do We Know God Exists?

Assault on God

{Summarize quickly - 5 min!}

- **In the Past month ...**
 - **Billboard** – You do not need God to be happy
 - **“Nativity”** - What myths do you see
 - In a public display of opposition against Christianity, a **group of atheists on Saturday tore apart photocopies of Bible verses that they view as immoral and illegal.**
 - "Is anyone among you sick? Then he must call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up ..."
 - Bruce Gleason, who heads the group, told The Christian Post earlier that he was "doing this to make this a better world" because he felt that "reason, science, and critical thinking will do much more than prayer and belief."
 - **Atheist Richard Dawkins Pens Children's Book on 'Magic' of Evolution**
 - *The Magic of Reality: How We Know What's Really True* is Dawkins' latest work attempting to explain life in terms of evolution
 - “What are things made of? Who were the first man and woman? When did everything begin?” Those are a few of the mysteries that Dawkins believes science – or “the magic of reality,” as he dubs it – can thoroughly explain.
 - “When children ask ‘where did I come from’ they are quite capable of understanding – and being taught – evolution,” Dawkins penned. “Evolution could be taught in such a way as to make it easier to understand than a myth.”
 - “Reality has a grander, poetic magic of its own, which I hope I can get across,” ... The author desired to share with his readers the supposed truth of evolution, which to him, was more interesting and more poetic than biblical “myths” and “hundreds of [other] creation myths from around the world.”
- **The “Old Atheists”**
 - **Until a few hundred years ago there were no atheists!** Society built on the assumption there was a God both behind the world and acting within the world. Science, and everything else, subject to the oversight of the church.
 - There would certainly have been functional atheists – those who claim there is a God but do not know Him or live like He is there ... but very few would have denied he exists
 - Atheism becomes a ‘word’ in oxford English dictionary in 16th century
 - 19th century – what Mohler calls “the **4 horsemen of the modern apocalypse**”
 - **Friedrich Nietzsche** – Philosophy - God is Dead
 - **Sigmund Freud** – Psychology - Concepts of God all in the mind
 - **Karl Marx** – Politics - Religion is the opiate of the masses
 - **Charles Darwin** – Science – Origin of Species in Natural Selection
 - All wrote to the intellectual elite, and had a small following (even by 19070’s only 2% of people claimed to be atheists) – but those few were in the places of influence!
 - **They changed the game from a world were God was assumed and seen everywhere to one where the very existence of God could be questioned and where whole areas of life and study could be untaken without God**

- **The “New Atheists”**
 - **New generation** of Atheists and Atheist writers
 - Don’t just write to the elite ... write to the people – **NY Times best sellers!**
 - More from the **science** field than philosophy
 - **More positive**, even if they can not give reason for it (Nietzsche saw that without God there was little purpose to life, new atheists not so concerned to take it to the end)
 - **Much more evangelistic** – they are trying to change the mind of all the people
 - **Much more antagonistic** – belief in God is dangerous, needs to be stopped!
 - Today – what Mohler calls “the **4 horsemen of the new atheist apocalypse**”
 - **Richard Dawkins** – Oxford – “The Selfish Gene”, “The God Delusion” – also “Viruses of the Mind”, “A Devil’s Chaplain”, and the kids book mentioned before
 - **Daniel Dennett** – Tufts – “Darwin’s Dangerous Idea”, “Breaking the Spell: Religion as Natural Phenomenon”
 - **Sam Harris** – “The End of Faith”, “Letters to a Christian Nation” (US should be embarrassed because it is not more secular!)
 - **Christopher Hitchens** – “God is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything”
 - **Seeking to change the game again, from OK to question God’s existence to insist God does not exist and the need to eradicate the concept of God**
- **Example:** Recent Discovery Channel show called “**Curiosity**” – premier week question “**Did God Create the Universe?**” – Stephen Hawking’s describe science of universe, leading to this conclusion:

○ **Show video of last 4 minutes of show**

• **Small Groups** *{5 min SG, 5 min process answers}*

- **Gut Reaction**
- **How do you think about this** (not what you would say, but how think)
- **What might you say to a friend?** (if they expressed some of these ideas, asked about show)

- **Classic “Theistic Proofs”**
 - **Ontological Argument** – Philosophical argument for the concept of God
 - **Cosmological Argument** – There must be some reason the universe came into existence, and there must be something before the universe that brought it into existence
 - **Teleological Argument** – Complexity of universe shows creator (2nd law of thermodynamics would say if left alone a system will move from complex to simple, not the reverse)
 - **Moral Argument** – All people believe in right and wrong, must be outside moral source
 - **Pascal’s Wager** – Better to believe in God and be wrong, than not believe and be wrong

- **Lewis’s “Arguments” for God** (see C.S. Lewis’s “Miracles”)
 - First shows we live in a supernatural world
 - Then shows that the only form of supernatural that makes sense is single God
 - Then shows that one God is the God of the Bible
 - Then goes on for remainder of book to talk about miracle

- **McDowell’s “Evidence” of God** (see Josh McDowell’s “Evidence That Demand a Verdict”)
 - Archeological, Historic, Scientific evidences for the Bible, God, Jesus, Resurrection ...

- **Keller’s “Clues” to God’s Existence** (see Timothy Keller’s “The Reason for God”)
 - **The Mysterious Bang** - why would there be something rather than nothing? Always a Cause
 - **The Cosmic Welcome Mat** – conditions for universe, life, earth, man
 - **The Regularity of Nature** – scientific theory based on ordered, consistent universe
 - **The Clue of Beauty** – music, nature, art ... longing for joy, love, beauty beyond what we can experience in this life– feel like more than naturalistic impulses of the brain! (ex. Romance)
 - **The Clue-Killer ... as Clue** – Naturalist argues these are all imaginings of mind for some evolutionary advantage (new atheists argue it was an advantage some time in the past, now a disadvantage). BUT if all our thoughts, feeling, understanding of the world simple conditioned response needed for survival and not to be trusted ... isn’t the theory of evolution by definition in the same boat, and thus equally as suspect as religion ... and at least as equally likely to be true or false as God?
 - **Morality** – We all know there is Good and Evil, and we all want good to be blessed and evil to be punished ...
 - **Example:** open air evangelist at Penn

- **Could look at and say much more ...** But in the end none of these are the primary or most persuasive argument, and as helpful as some of them are, none of these will ever truly convince anyone!

Recommended Reading

“Atheism Remix” by R. Albert Mohler Jr.

“The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism” by Timothy Keller

“Miracles: How God Intervenes in Nature and Human Affairs” by C. S. Lewis

“Evidence That Demands a Verdict” by Josh McDowell

1 In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. 2 The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. 3 And God said...

- **Genesis starts with God**
 - In the beginning ... God ... before anything else, before time or people or universe ... in time of the void when nothing was ... there was God!
- **All of Bible assumes God**
 - Bible not argue for God, try to prove God ... States there is a God, describes God, speaks authoritatively as Word of God
- **God is one and only creator**
 - From nothing ... even before discuss how, timing, etc – key undeniable truth – God was there, nothing else was there, and God is the one who created everything!

{note: much more we could say, plan to offer class on Genesis this summer}

All Men Know There Is a God! - Romans 1:18-20

18 The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, 19 since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. 20 For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

- **What may be known about God – PLAIN to men**
 - **Not hidden**, not seen by some – PLAIN, visible, understandable to all me
 - So **easy to see and understand** that God can rightfully call to account any who do not recognize him
 - Notice verse 18 – **wrath of God** ... because we suppress obvious truth!
 - Many think **on judgment day** they will say to God “Why did you not show yourself more clearly” – instead God is going to say “I made myself plain, why did you not believe!”
- **God's invisible qualities seen**
 - Again, we argue how can I believe in a **God I can not see** ...
 - God says his **invisible qualities** can be seen by all ...
 - Not just seen, but **seen and understood** ...
 - Enough to be **without excuse**
 - What are those invisible qualities
 - **Eternal power** – was, is, is to come ... all powerful creator & sustainer
 - **Divine nature** – is God by nature, is self existent, is ultimate
 - That is what we should see when we look at **Creation!**

All Men Suppress That Truth - Romans 1:21-25

21 For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools 23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

- **Knew God ... But refused to give glory and thanks**
 - Again, truth not hidden – **they Knew God**
 - **But decided not to glorify or thank him ...**
 - **Why?** Why would we not glorify and thank God?
 - If we admit there is a God we also have to admit we are not!
 - If there is a creator, he has a right to be who He is not who I want him to be
 - If he created me, he has a right to dictate my life, whether I like it or not
 - Even the act of thanking God would need to be done his way! (see cain and abel)
 - Huge implications to acknowledge there is a God!

21 For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools 23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

- So instead our **thinking becomes futile** and our **foolish minds are darkened**
 - Our whole way of looking at and thinking about the world becomes false, **a groping in the dark, a futile attempt to understand ...** because we have denied the fundamental truth of God that underlies everything
 - **John 3:19-20**
*This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but **men loved darkness** instead of light because their deeds were evil. **Everyone who does evil hates the light**, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.*
- **Claiming to be Wise they Became Fools**
 - **Psalm 14:1, 53:1**
*The fool says in his heart,
"There is no God."
They are corrupt, their deeds are vile;
there is no one who does good.*
 - All these atheists we read about claim to be wise, and the world has acknowledged them as that ... **But God's verdict is they are fools!**
 - Know matter how much they have advanced science ... they have missed the fundamental, most basic, most obvious point – **it all points to God!**

- **Exchanged Glory of God**
 - **Ancient cultures**, and some around the world today, make carved idols to represent the Gods – some in human forms, some in animal forms, some like the sun, moon and stars ... But all of those are corrupt substitutes for the real God,
 - and they are all **gods that are mortal**, for this life only, not immortal
 - **But we do the same** – science, even religion, carves out pictures of some god, be it nature itself or some force or any god other than the God of the Bible, that are merely mortal images and corrupt copies of the real God
 - **When we worship any of these images we are by definition exchanging the glory and immortality of the real God for these worthless idols**

Note: even they know it:

“The reasonable view was to believe in spontaneous generation; the only alternative, to believe in a single, primary act of supernatural creation. There is no third position. For this reason many scientists a century ago chose to regard the belief in spontaneous generation as a "philosophical necessity." ... “Most modern biologists, having reviewed with satisfaction the downfall of the spontaneous generation hypothesis, yet unwilling to accept the alternative belief in special creation, are left with nothing. (George Wald, Nobel Laureate and Prof. of Biology at Harvard, "The origin of life" *Scientific American* August 1954 p.46)

"Evolution [is] a theory universally accepted not because it can be proven by logically coherent evidence to be true, but because the only alternative, special creation, is clearly incredible."
(Professor D.M.S. Watson, leading biologist and science writer of his day.)

24 Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. 25 They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.

- **Exchanged Truth of God**
 - **Again, it is an exchange – now truth for a lie** – there really is truth, and God is that truth ... anything else is a lie and is incompatible with the true God
- **Worship and Serve Created Things**
 - **Studying the cosmos** ... or the world of microbiology ... or the environment ... or animals ... or societies ... or people themselves is great – **BUT all of these need to lead to worshipping and serving God!**
 - If they ever lead **to worshipping and serving the created thing** we are in trouble!
 - Here is where so much science, environmental concern, social concern goes bad – it **becomes a worship of the cosmos or animals or self rather than God**
 - **What is the correct response to everything around us – not just seeing and understanding God – but Worshipping and Serving the creator who is forever praised!**

- **Romans 1 goes on to say ...**
 - *28 Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God*
 - *32 Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.*
 - And then it describes God's response to our rejection of Him ... which we will come back to in 2 weeks when we look at the problem of evil

So what do we do with all this?

Some Implications of Romans 1

- **Do you believe all creation reveals God?**
 - Don't be ashamed or embarrassed to talk about God – and in truth / absolute terms
 - Point out to people where you see God in creation ... cultivate a lifestyle of not just seeing God but talking as if He is there {**example:** Drexel sociology student – “I Believe God is...”}
- **Do you believe people already know there is a God?**
 - If so you can speak with them boldly, knowing somewhere it will ring true (they may not acknowledge that, but Romans says they know it's true)
 - You can also ask the type of questions, tap into things in their life that will help them see their need for God
 - The various proofs and evidence and clues can be helpful in a conversation, but in the end they are not what will win the person over – take them to nature and to scripture and unapologetically show them the true God!
- **Do you believe their foolish hearts are darkened?**
 - Then don't be discouraged if they reject the truth – they have been doing that all their lives!
 - Don't assume you can change them ... only God can do that ...
 - So be encouraged, even if they show no outward signs God may be working in their heart!

How do you approach / get to know the true God yourself

- Does creation, people, your life lead you to glorify?
- Does it lead you to love and serve God?

Ultimate Application for each person - Worship our Creator!

Optional: Grandeur of God and His Creation

Video: “Creation Calls – Are You Listening” (downloaded from *TheBranch.org*, also available on YouTube)
 Music by Brian Doerksen, video from “Planet Earth” DVD used with permission of the BBC

3) Who is the True God?

{5 - 10 min}

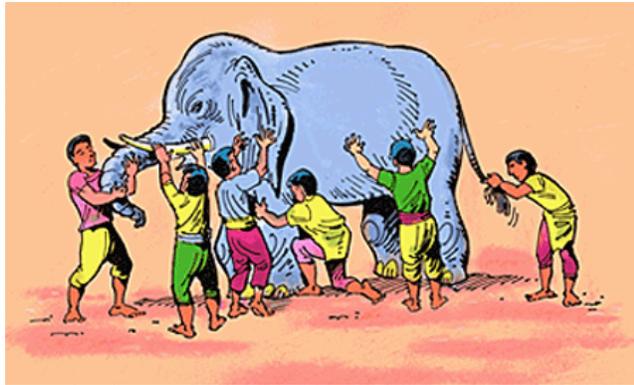
Optional: The Blind Men and the Elephant

Poem by John Godfrey Saxe (1816-1887)

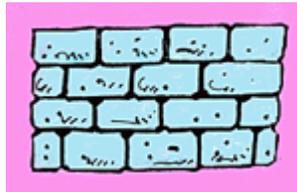
Graphic by WordInfo (see endnote)

Based on a popular fable from India

It was six men of Indostan
To learning much inclined,
Who went to see the Elephant
(Though all of them were blind),
That each by observation
Might satisfy his mind



The First approached the Elephant,
And happening to fall
Against his broad and sturdy side,
At once began to bawl:
"God bless me! but the Elephant
Is very like a wall!"



The Second, feeling of the tusk,
Cried, "Ho! what have we here
So very round and smooth and sharp?
To me 'tis mighty clear
This wonder of an Elephant
Is very like a spear!"



The Third approached the animal,
And happening to take
The squirming trunk within his hands,
Thus boldly up and spake:
"I see," quoth he, "the Elephant
Is very like a snake!"



The Fourth reached out an eager hand,
And felt about the knee.
"What most this wondrous beast is like
Is mighty plain," quoth he;
" 'Tis clear enough the Elephant
Is very like a tree!"



The Fifth, who chanced to touch the ear,
Said: "E'en the blindest man
Can tell what this resembles most;
Deny the fact who can
This marvel of an Elephant
Is very like a fan!"



In the Beginning God...

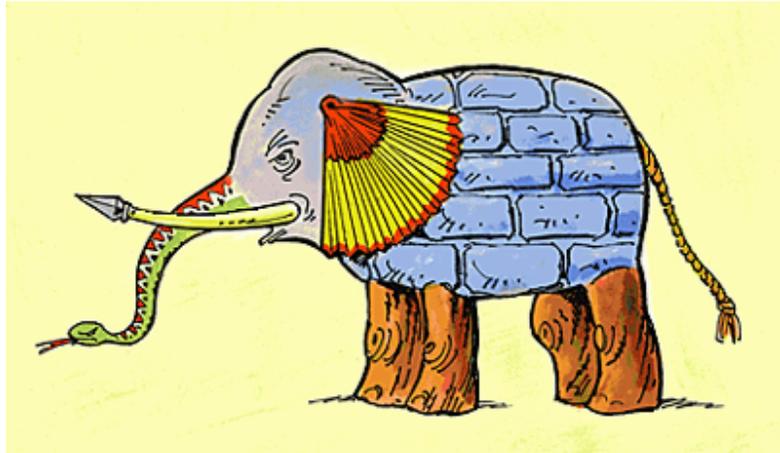
The Sixth no sooner had begun
 About the beast to grope,
 Than, seizing on the swinging tail
 That fell within his scope,
 "I see," quoth he, "the Elephant
 Is very like a rope!"



And so these men of Indostan
 Disputed loud and long,
 Each in his own opinion
 Exceeding stiff and strong,
 Though each was partly in the right,
 And all were in the wrong!

Moral:

So oft in theologic wars,
 The disputants, I ween,
 Rail on in utter ignorance
 Of what each other mean,
 And prate about an Elephant
 Not one of them has seen!



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Optional: "Is there Truth?" or "Do all paths lead to God?"

A. Example: Moral of "The Blind Men and The Elephant"

- a. **Claim:** all feel part of God, none see all ... so none should arrogantly claim they are right ... in the end all had some aspect right, but overall picture wrong
- b. **Add 7th Blindman** –not feel any elephant so conclude elephant not exist ... WRONG, there is an elephant!
- c. **Elephant speak** – explains he is an elephant ... Those claim he is wall, snake etc. now entirely, willfully WRONG
- d. **Elephant actually on the move**, heading to man claim he does not exist ... WRONG will get RUN OVER!

B. Bible

- a. Bible claims **there is a God** ... and so any claim to there being no God is FALSE

Genesis 1:1

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

Bible talks of God on virtually every page

- b. Bible makes the claim **God speaks to us**, and that **He speaks in the Bible** ... so claims he is silent, or that Bible is manmade, or any claim to God that contradicts Bible are FALSE

II Timothy 3:26

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,

Bible gives many attributes and pictures of God – any view of God that only includes a select portion of those and denies any of the rest is also a false God

- c. The God of Bible says he is **Only God**, and **Jesus says he is only way to God** ... and **all other gods are worthless** ... so if Bible is true, all other paths to God are excluded ... and if Bible not true it is then not a path to God ... thus in either case “all paths lead to God” is False

I Timothy 2:5-6

For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men—the testimony given in its proper time.

John 14:6

Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Psalm 96:4-5

***For great is the LORD and most worthy of praise;
he is to be feared above all gods.
For all the gods of the nations are idols,
but the LORD made the heavens.***

- d. God has said we need to **proclaim him to others...** and that **he will judge all** ... so claims it does not matter to me, or that it I have no right to tell you what to believe are FALSE

Psalm 96:1-3, 6-10

***Sing to the LORD a new song;
sing to the LORD, all the earth.
Sing to the LORD, praise his name;
proclaim his salvation day after day.
Declare his glory among the nations,
his marvelous deeds among all peoples.***

***Ascribe to the LORD, O families of nations,
ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.
Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name;
bring an offering and come into his courts.
Worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness;
tremble before him, all the earth.
Say among the nations, “The LORD reigns.”
The world is firmly established, it cannot be moved;
he will judge the peoples with equity.***

Who is God & How do You Know Him?

BFC Articles of Faith – Article 3, God the Father

There is but one living and true God, immanent, transcendent, infinite in being and perfection, pure spirit, invisible, immutable, eternal, almighty, all wise, most holy, most free, most loving, most gracious, most merciful, longsuffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin, the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him, and withal most just and terrible in His judgments, hating all sin. He will by no means clear the guilty.

Recommended Reading

“Knowing God” by J.I. Packer

“Desiring God” by John Piper

“The Heart of Passion” DVD by Louie Giglio

3) Why does it matter if there is a God? {15 Min.}

A. **Example: Sociology Claim:** Can study people and how interact without reference to God

- a. Drexel “Classical Social Theory” - Deterministic or Volunteristic world – does not matter if God is first cause or not, same end results, and so study without reference to God

B. **Example: Three Pots**

- a. **3 vases on bench ... Describe ... Why here? ... Where come from?**
 - i. I can see some things with my eyes ... but what of creation
 - ii. Can I fully describe vases without reference to a creator?
 - iii. What of purpose ... why made, why here now?
- b. **Knock one vase on floor ... why broken pieces on floor**
 - i. Science can tell about gravity, why vase break instead of floor...
 - ii. But why fall from bench? ... cannot say without ref. to my hand
- c. **Conclusions**
 - i. **At Best:** things I cannot know without reference to creator / unseen hand moving things
 - ii. **At Worst:** come up with false theories ... dirt and water and pigment all come together themselves, gravity act on vase in way to pull it off bench, vase jump, other vases jealous.
- d. **Further Thought**
 - i. Even if I allow for creator / mover there are still unanswered questions – why these specific vases? Why here? What is their purpose? Why middle one smashed?
 - ii. Only one way to definitively answer – creator / mover has to tell us

C. Bible

a. **Potter and Clay**

Isaiah 45:9-12

*“Woe to him who quarrels with his Maker,
to him who is but a potsherd among the potsherds on the ground.*

Does the clay say to the potter,

‘What are you making?’

Does your work say,

‘He has no hands’?

Woe to him who says to his father,

‘What have you begotten?’

or to his mother,

‘What have you brought to birth?’

“This is what the LORD says—

the Holy One of Israel, and its Maker:

Concerning things to come,

do you question me about my children,

or give me orders about the work of my hands?

It is I who made the earth

and created mankind upon it.

Isaiah 64:8-9

Yet, O LORD, you are our Father.

We are the clay, you are the potter;

we are all the work of your hand.

Do not be angry beyond measure, O LORD;

do not remember our sins forever.

Oh, look upon us, we pray,

for we are all your people.

Romans 9:19-25

*One of you will say to me: “Then why does God still blame us? For who resists his will?” But who are you, O man, to talk back to God? “**Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, ‘Why did you make me like this?’**” **Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for noble purposes and some for common use?** What if God, choosing to show his wrath and make his power known, bore with great patience the objects of his wrath—prepared for destruction? What if he did this to make the riches of his glory known to the objects of his mercy, whom he prepared in advance for glory— even us, whom he also called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles? As he says in Hosea:*

“I will call them ‘my people’ who are not my people;

and I will call her ‘my loved one’ who is not my loved one,”

b. **God created ... for a purpose ... and still interacts today**

Genesis 2 (selected) (notice everything the LORD does!)

When the LORD God made the earth and the heavens. .. no shrub of the field had yet appeared on the earth ... for the LORD God had not sent rain on the earth... the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

Now the LORD God had planted a garden ... he put the man he had formed. ... the LORD God made all kinds of trees grow ...

The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; ¹⁷ but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."

The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."

Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them..

But for Adam no suitable helper was found. So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

Throughout the rest of the Bible God is constantly talking to man, either blessing and coming to his aid or coming against men ...

c. **Those claims effect everything** ... can not do science, sociology, psychology, ... even art, math, nursing, parenting ... anything at all without God in the picture.

God sends rain, God owns cattle on 1000 hills, God made and sustains the heavens and earth, God will one day make a new heaven and earth, Christ upholds all things by the breath of His mouth, God made us and knows us and directs us, God addresses our hearts and actions ... can not study science, sociology, psychology without Bible

God talks of money, and employers and employees, and fair business practices. He talks of serving the **poor and needy**, widow and orphan, being compassionate, he gives life and death – can not talk about business or job or medicine without God

Even if Art – is beauty in the eye of the artist or the eye of the beholder –neither, God is the ultimate creator who made us creative, who is himself beautiful and makes beauty, and who all things should glorify – so beauty is in the eyes of the Creator! (example – what flowers to put in vase? Best to make it ones I as maker, owner and sustainer of pot likes, if I like I may make it centerpiece, if not I might just destroy it!)

- d. God has created the universe with observable patterns / laws, so **it is helpful to study** gravity, or sickness, or computer programming ... but the Bible claims God created all, for a purpose, and he is still active in executing that purpose today ... so just as the vase can not be fully explained, or any part even properly explained, apart from me, and any attempt to do so will end up further from the truth, **so with every aspect of life**

Conclusion: Implications for Good Stewardship ...

{ 5+ min }

- **All of the World is God's**
 - He is Creator
 - He is Ruler
 - He is Sustainer
 - He is Still Active in World
 - He is Source of Life and Death
 - He will End world as we know it
 - He will Judge
 - He is setting up His eternal Kingdom

- **The World is Not Mine!**
 - I am a creation
 - I am a subject
 - I have not life or breath apart from God
 - I have no power to do anything God does not grant
 - I will die, and I will be judged

- **God has appointed us Vice-Regents, to rule the world on His behalf**
 - **Vice-Regents** ... real authority, but derived and accountable authority
 - Need to be careful not to stage a coup, try to overthrow God, "become like God knowing good and evil"
 - Need to also be careful not to advocate, deciding not to fulfill call of God

 - **Creation Mandate**
Genesis 1:26-28

²⁶ Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

²⁷ So God created man in his own image,
in the image of God he created him;
male and female he created them.

²⁸ God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

- **Great Commission**

- Matthew 28:18-20**

- ¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in^[a] the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

- **We have a task ... great freedom and authority ... but also accountability**

- **There is a day of reckoning ... and Reward**

- We will one day see God face to face
- We will all bow – atheist, other religions, Christians, Satan ... all will bow to the one true God
- Those written in Lamb's book of life get eternal life
- The rest get eternal fire
- Those that have been good stewards are given rewards

- **Stewardship in this life**

- Thus I approach my time, money, planet ... my very heart and soul ... **understanding that they are all given to me, by God, for His purposes and His glory.** But that if I use them well, that is to say invest them in the ways God himself desired, I will be blessed in this life and the next
- So, while **Christian and Non-Christian** all talk about schedules and budgets, recycling and caring for the heart ... the Bible approaches all of those uniquely
 - God is the one that provides, every minute, every dollar, every tree, and every breath!
 - Since God set up the world, he uniquely knows how it works ... so when he talks of a day of rest, or contentment in all financial situations, or care for His creation, or loving Him with heart, soul, mind and strength he has both the definitive word on the subject, as well as the wise and good word
 - My role needs to be the one God has given – to use, enjoy, care for, fill and rule this world ... and my motivation in all that is to give God the glory
 - And there is an end, a day when I will answer for my stewardship ... and when all who know Christ will enter their rest, spending eternity enjoying both God and His New Heaven and Earth!

PRAY

Join us for the next 4 weeks:

- **Time**
- **Money**
- **Creation**
- **Life**

For Further Study:

Who Do We Serve? What Makes a Good Steward?

Biblical Passages: Jesus' Parables on Servants

- Mathew 18:21-35
- Matthew 21:33-46; Mark 12:1-12; Luke 20:9-18
- Matthew 24:36-41; Mark 13:32-37; Luke 12:35-48
- Matthew 25:14-30; Luke 19:11-27
- Luke 16:1-13
- Luke 17:7-10
- John 13:12-20; John 15:18-25
- John 15:12-17

Is There a God?

Biblical Passages:

- Genesis 1
- Romans 1

Good Books:

- "Atheism Remix" by R. Albert Mohler Jr.
- "The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism" by Timothy Keller
- "Miracles: How God Intervenes in Nature and Human Affairs" by C. S. Lewis
- "Evidence That Demands a Verdict" by Josh McDowell

Who Is God?

Biblical Passages:

- Exodus 34:6-7
- Psalm 24
- Isaiah 40
- Colossians 1

Good Books:

- "Knowing God" by J.I. Packer
- "Desiring God" by John Piper
- "Experiencing God" by Henry T. Blackaby and Claude V. King
- "The Heart of Passion" DVD by Louie Giglio

Why Does It Matter?

Biblical Passages:

- Creation Mandate - Genesis 1:26-28
- Great Commission - Matthew 28:18-20

Good Books:

- "All of Life Redeemed" by Frey, Ingram, McWhertor and Romanowski

Audio recordings, teaching notes, handouts, etc. from this series can be found at:

Gracebfc.org (click the image for "God's World, Our Responsibility" or go to "Teaching Archives")