

Lesson 1 Lecture
Psalms 8, 19, 104, 111, 148
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Welcome! I would like to welcome all of you to what I pray will be an exciting exploration of the character of God in this journey through the Psalms and the Proverbs. Before I get into today's study of God – Our Maker, I'm going to ask that you indulge me for a few minutes to summarize my personal experience in coming to believe in God – I promise there's a purpose to this. For approximately the first 30 years of my life, I did not believe in God. I grew up in a home where God was never discussed and the only reason I ever went to church was for a wedding or a funeral. I shamefully lived a virtually unexamined life. I was pursuing the American dream, and I've come to realize that such a pursuit without a living in a right relationship with God is a spiritual nightmare.

Thankfully, God had a plan for me, and that plan kicked into gear when He brought a beautiful woman into my life who would become my wife. Not only was she beautiful, but she was a Christian. I didn't even know what a Christian was with the exception that I thought they believed in God. She asked me to go to church with her, so what does every red-blooded man do when he is falling for a woman do when she asks him to go to church? He goes to church! So, one Sunday morning we go to Calvary Chapel, and I'm listening to Chuck Smith. As he is teaching, he's making pretty good sense, and I found myself asking the question, 'Is there a God?' As I thought about it some more, a more basic question came to my mind, 'How did I become me?'

I started looking into this question, and it became clear there were 2 basic theories as to How I Became Me. The first theory was the Theory of Evolution can crudely be summed up as coming from the ooze, to the zoo, to me and you – Goo Man. I found problems with this theory.

- There is way too much design in the universe and especially for man to chalk off as things coming together randomly. It takes more faith to believe in that than it does to believe in God
- According to *evolutionist* William Provine of Cornell University, if Darwin is correct then:
 - There's no evidence for God
 - There's no life after death
 - There's no absolute foundation for right or wrong
 - There's no ultimate meaning for life

- People don't really have free will

Because I observed there was too much design in the universe, I had to conclude if there is a design, there must be a Designer. Therefore, after reviewing the Theory of Evolution, I couldn't help but to conclude it was a lie and an attempt by an unbelieving man to discredit the truth of God.

So, that left me with one option – the theory of creationism and the existence of God. Once I was willing to accept there was a God, I eventually came up with three core truths about God – I call it the AAA argument for God:

Authority – if there is a God, and He created me, then I, the creation, am subject to (or under authority to) the Creator. God's authority over me was (and still is) a challenge as I have always had a problem with authority.

Accountability – if there is a God, and He is in a position of authority, then my actions as His creation are accountable to His standards – in other words, there are rewards and consequences to my obedience and disobedience to His ways and commandments. I grew up in a home where there was no accountability whatsoever – it was always someone else's fault.

The last A – we'll get back to this later - so I was left with some serious personal challenges to believing in God – but I didn't know which God I should believe in – so the adventure continued. I had to figure out what kind of God do I want to believe in. Well, there was Buddhism, but I found problems with Buddhism.

- His teaching was generally good but the path to a good life is based on works
- Buddha's dead

Another option was Islam, but I found problems with it as well.

- There is no mention of God's love in the Quran
- Its teachings are based on works with no way to measure what is "enough" to get to heaven
- The founder, Mohammed, is dead

Then I arrived at Christianity. It made sense, for me, for many reasons.

- God was perfect & holy. Don't we want a perfect and holy God? Who wants a God that isn't perfect or makes a mistake? One who doesn't know what is right or wrong – moreover *defines* what is right or wrong.
- Recognized the human condition before a Holy God
- An infinite God reaches down to a finite man as opposed to a finite man reaching up to an infinite God
- Provided Himself as the tool of forgiveness for this condition out of His love
- Jesus is Alive
- The Holy Spirit convinced me of the truth

I want to emphasize the last point. I encourage all of you to ask the Holy Spirit to test what either Carol, me, or any of the other lecturers are claiming. If you feel uncomfortable with something that is said, ask the Spirit to help you find Scripture to support or refute what is being claimed.

So, I come to believe in God and, I buy a Bible. He wastes no time claiming Himself as Creator in Genesis 1:1, “In the beginning, **God** created the heavens and the earth.” Who is the God in the Bible? In the Bible, someone's name often gave insight to the person. The word “God” in Genesis 1:1 in Hebrew is *Elohim*. Elohim is the primary Hebrew word translated “God” in the Old Testament. “*El*” means “mighty” or “strong.” “*him*” is a plural ending indicating more than one. This does not mean there is more than one God. Deuteronomy 6:4: Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Therefore, in the first verse of the Bible, we are introduced to an immediate reference to the Triune God.

This is not the forum to get into a full-blown discussion of the Holy Trinity – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. In fact, I've heard one pastor say “if you want to try to figure out the Trinity, forget it.” But it is worth noting that Scripture tells us all three members of the Trinity were involved in creation.

John 1:1-3: In the beginning was the Word (Jesus), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. *Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.*

Colossians 1:16: *For by Him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by Him and for Him.*

Genesis 1:2b: The Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

Okay – that’s enough about me, let’s get to today’s lesson. Fittingly, as we begin our adventure in coming to know God in the Psalms and Proverbs, we should begin with the beginning – God as Our Maker. The first of the 5 Psalms selected to cover this aspect of God is Psalm 8. Its author is King David. It is a Messianic Psalm – means it is quoted in the New Testament in direct reference to the Lord Jesus Christ. Psalm 8 is quoted 3 times in the New Testament:

1. Matthew 21:16: "Do you hear what these children are saying?" they asked him. "Yes," replied Jesus, "have you never read, " *'From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise'?*" (Ps. 8:4)
2. 1 Corinthians 15:27: For he *"has put everything under his feet*. Now when it says that "everything" has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. (Ps. 8:6)
3. Hebrews 2:5-9: It is not to angels that he has subjected the world to come, about which we are speaking. But there is a place where someone has testified: *"What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the angels; you crowned him with glory and honor and put everything under his feet."* In putting everything under him, God left nothing that is not subject to him. Yet at present we do not see everything subject to him. But we see *Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels*, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. (Ps. vs. 4 & 6)

Starting with chapter verse 1, we read, “O LORD, our Lord.” When you see the word LORD in all capitals, it is a translation of the Hebrew name for God – YHVH. No one is really sure how this is pronounced – Yahweh or Jehovah are often used. The Jews held the name so sacred that they wouldn’t even say the name. LORD is a Hebrew verb for “I am that I am” or more literally “The Becoming One”. It is a name to which God describes His desired relationship to you – His desire to become whatever you need. “Lord” in the Hebrew translation is “Adonnai” which means “Master” – a title that signifies our relationship to Him.

Verse 1 continues, “You have set your glory *above* the heavens.” The heavens are not the glory of God – they declare the glory of God which is above the heavens. Verse 2 says, “From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise.” God has revealed Himself in such simple terms that even a child can come to know and have faith in Him.

There are several verses in this Psalm that point to God as the Creator:

Verse 3: When I consider your heavens, the *work of your fingers*, the moon and the stars which *You have set* in place.

Verse 5: You *made* him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor.

Verse 6: You *made* him ruler over the *works of Your hands*; You *put* everything under his feet.

Moving into Psalm 19, it is another Psalm by King David. It is divided into 2 parts:

- 1) God revealed in Creation
- 2) God revealed in the Commandments or Law, or His Word

Some scholars divide it into a third part which is God revealed in His grace in Christ. I'll focus on those verses (1-6) that emphasize God as Creator. Verse 1 is the key verse to God as the Creator, "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the *work* of His hands." The Apostle Paul made this key observation regarding God as Creator in Romans 1:20, "For since the *creation* of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are *made*, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse."

J. Vernon McGee commented on this verse, "The heavens tell out the wisdom of God, they tell out the power of God, and they tell out something of the purpose of God. From the beginning creation has been the primitive witness of God to man, His creature." We're starting to see a purpose to God's creative works – to reveal Himself to His creation.

Psalm 104's author is unknown – these Psalms are sometimes called orphan Psalms. I think that's silly – they are authored by the God the Father's and God the Son's Spirit! This is another Psalm about nature – a hymn to God in nature because He is the Creator. It appropriately starts with a verse of praise: "Praise the LORD, O my soul. O LORD my God, you are very great; you are clothed with splendor and majesty." This Psalm provides beautiful imagery to the steps of creation in the first chapter of Genesis.

Verse 2 offers a relatable image, “Who cover Yourself with light as with a garment, Who stretch out the heavens like a curtain.” Let’s go back to chapter of Genesis in verses 1:3-4a on the first day of creation: “Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. And God saw the light, that *it was good*,” Imagine how you wake up in the morning and stretch out your curtains to reveal the light.

Verse 3: “He lays the beams of His upper chambers in the waters, Who makes the clouds His chariot, Who walks on the wings of the wind,” Going back again to the first chapter of Genesis in verse 6 on the second day of creation: “Then God said, ‘Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.’”

The relationship with Psalm 104 and Genesis 1 continues. Verses 5-6: “He set the earth on its foundations; it can never be moved. You covered it with the deep as with a garment; the waters stood above the mountains.” Genesis 1:9: On the third day of creation: “Then God said, “Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry *land appear*”; *and it was so.*”

Verse 19: “The moon marks off the seasons, and the sun knows when to go down.” The sun and moon are placed here to regulate time here on earth. God did not create the sun and the moon on the fourth day, but He did say in Genesis 1:14: “Then God said, “Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years;”

Verse 25-26: “There is the sea, vast and spacious, ^{teeming} teeming with creatures beyond number - living things both large and small. There the ships go to and fro, and the leviathan, which you formed to frolic there.” What did God create on the 5th day? Genesis 1:20a, 21a: “Then God said, “Let the waters abound with an abundance of living creatures; so, God created great sea creatures and every living thing that moves, with which the waters abounded,”

Verse 30-31: “When you send your Spirit, they are *created*, and you renew the face of the earth. May the glory of the LORD endure forever; may the LORD rejoice in His *works*” What did God say when He was done with creation on the sixth day? Genesis 1:31: “Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed *it was very good.*” We’ll get back to this last comment shortly.

Psalm 11’s author is also unknown, and it is an acrostic Psalm – each verse starts with a succeeding letter in the Hebrew alphabet. It starts with a statement of praise,

“Praise the Lord! I will praise the Lord with my whole heart.” What is the Psalmist praising God for? His creative works:

Verse 2: “Great are the *works* of the LORD; they are pondered by all who delight in them.”

Verse 3: “Glorious and majestic are his *deeds*, and His righteousness endures forever.”

Verse 4: “He has *caused* His wonders to be remembered; the LORD is gracious and compassionate.”

There are more reasons to praise God:

Verse 5: “He *provides* food for those who fear him; He remembers his covenant forever.”

Verse 7: “The *works* of His hands are faithful and just; all his precepts are trustworthy.”

If all of this is true to us today, and it is, then we should be praising God all the time!

We arrive at our 5th and final Psalm for today – Psalm 148. Again, we don’t know the author, and it is a Psalm of praise to the God of creation – Verse 5b: “For He commanded and they were created.”

The below is not the entire list – but it gives us an idea of the scope of God’s creation.

Angels Hosts Sun & Moon Fire & Hail Stars of Light
Heavens of Heavens Waters Above the Heavens
Great sea creatures and all the depths Stormy wind
Snow & Clouds Beasts & all cattle Mountains & all Hills
Fruitful trees & all cedars Creeping things & flying fowl
Kings of the earth & all people; both young men & maidens

Okay – we’ve gone through the 5 Psalms for today, and we see clear and bold proclamations that there is a God, and He is the Creator. Let me ask you a simple question – So What? In other words, what’s the big deal? Well, it’s a very big deal. Let me now revisit my AAA truths that must be so if there is a God. To refresh

your memories, the first two “A”s were Authority and Accountability. Because of our sinful nature – the first two truths contain a negative connotation – but they shouldn’t. What do you think the last “A” is? This is based on the Word of God. It is Acceptance.

We’ve covered a lot today regarding knowing God as our Maker, but if you remember anything from what’s been said, PLEASE remember this. Tragically, there are many people who go through life being told they were or are not wanted; they were a mistake, an “oops”, or an accident – some of you may feel that way. The Bible – God’s Word - proves that’s a lie. Listen very carefully – Every one of you is wanted by God and loved by God BECAUSE you were created by God. I want to say this regularly to yourselves, “I am wanted by God and I am loved by God BECAUSE I am created by God.”

There are NO exceptions. Anyone who tells you otherwise is a LIAR! Please follow what your Maker tells you in His Word:

Psalm 100:3: Know that the LORD is God. It is He who *made* us, and we are His; we are His people, the sheep of His pasture.

Psalm 119:73a: Your hands *made* me and formed me

Proverbs 20:12: Ears that hear and eyes that see - the LORD has *made* them both.

Psalm 139:14: I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully *made*; your *works* are wonderful, I know that full well.

Remember what God said when He was done with creation on the sixth day? Genesis 1:31: “Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed *it was very good*.” Paul confirms this in 1 Timothy 4:4a: “For everything God created is good.” Some of you might be saying, “Dan, you don’t know me – you don’t know what I’ve done. I am not good.” Well, you only are speaking a half-truth, and that is affirmed in Romans 3:12: “All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one.” So, you’re right, you are not good. So, how can God look at you and me as being very good? Look at what **He** says about you as you are:

Psalm 145:9: The LORD is good to all; He has compassion on all He has *made*.

Psalm 145:17: The LORD is righteous in all his ways and loving toward all he has *made*.

Jeremiah 29:11: “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

Does this sound like a God that doesn't care for His creation? Think about this – God was thinking about you before He created you, and He was thinking of you in nothing but a loving way. He knew you were going to rebel against Him before you were born, but you were born anyway. Ever thought about that? Would you want to create something that you knew in advance was going to do you wrong time and time again? I wouldn't – but thankfully, I'm not God. There is ONLY ONE reason that a Creator would still create someone whom He knew in advance all the suffering he/she would cause Him – Love - He loves you that much. Here's more proof.

Psalm 100:5: For the LORD is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.

Psalm 145:13: Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures through all generations. The LORD is faithful to all his promises and loving toward all he has *made*.

What is one of God's greatest promises?

Psalm 86:5: You are forgiving and good, O Lord, abounding in love to all who call to you.

As your Creator, God has the Authority to forgive you, and He is Accountable to His Word to Accept you – but you have a choice to make. You can choose to continue to believe the lie that you are not loved or wanted by God – I hope you don't. Not only does His Word tell you something different, His actions confirm it!

2 Corinthians 5:17, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!” You can choose to not believe or choose to make the choice that God wants you to make – accept His gift of complete forgiveness made only available by His Co-Creating Son Jesus. You will become a NEW creation. Your Creator has washed you from your sins, and He now sees you as He originally made you, and it is *very good*.

Romans 8:39: “neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Remember also that once you make the choice for Christ, NOTHING can separate you from the love of God.” Look at what the Lord Himself says in Luke 12:6-7: “Are not five sparrows sold for two copper coins? And not one of them is forgotten

before God. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.”

Do you believe this? I recently completed a study that began with this question: “Do you really believe that what you believe is really real?” Do you really believe that the Creator of the Universe and of you loves you supremely? I believe His Word makes it very clear, and that is why studying the Bible is so important – why this Bible study is so important. Knowing all these truths about God as our loving Creator, how should we respond? God has indeed been good to you and me. Will you please stand and join me as we sing the Doxology in praise of God?

Praise God from Whom all blessings flow
Praise Him all creatures here below
Praise Him above the heavenly host
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost

God bless you all!