

IN THE BEGINNING, GOD

David Halbrook

Everything that we see has a beginning. That is true of all physical things. If there is an exception, please write and tell me.

The book of Genesis tells us about their beginning, adding an important detail, “In the beginning, God...” (Genesis 1:1). Physical and human history begins with God already existing. Since God is spirit and cannot be defined by the laws of physics or nature, He has no beginning. In the Bible, God reveals that He is Jehovah, which means Self-Existent (eternal).

Why does this matter? Because all true knowledge begins here. “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge” (Prov. 1:7), even in a knowledge of science, history, physics, etc. Without including God in these fields of study, there will be many unanswerable questions. Modern leaders in these fields (potentially the professors teaching you, your children, or your grandchildren) often completely ignore and dismiss God’s part in the beginning. Yet the objects these people study and teach about **must** have had a beginning. What they choose to forget is that “in the beginning, God...” Do you have this knowledge or questions? Can we help?

-- *Editor’s Note:* Most likely, we know someone who doubts almost everything, not having been instructed about the basics of physical life. They need to be challenged to think about the beginning. Use our article in *Arkansas Weekly* to stimulate these thoughts. If you do not know someone like that, give the article to anyone this week. If we plant, God will give the increase. We all have the same seed—will you plant it?

We assemble each Sunday at 10AM, 10:45AM, 5PM & Wednesday at 7PM

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The Exhorter

Acts 11:23 *Exhorted them all... cleave unto the Lord*

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“HAVE YOU NOT READ?”

Jarrod Jacobs (The Way of Truth & Life, Apr 29, 2012; St. Leon, IN)

Within the pages of the New Testament, we find Jesus asking folks the question: “Have you not read?” This exact phrase was used by the Lord on three separate occasions, as He confronted the errors of the Pharisees and Sadducees when they tried to trap Jesus in His words (Matt. 12:3, 5, 19:4, 22:31; Mk. 12:10, 26; Lk. 6:3).

I think it would be a good thing if we asked ourselves that same question. In light of the fact that we live in a free nation, that grants all of its citizens an education so we can read; and in light of the fact that we have open and public access to the greatest book in the world, have we not read it? >From Old to New Testaments, there is great emphasis placed upon the reading and studying of Scripture (Ex. 24:7; Deut. 17:19, 31:11; Josh. 8:34-35; Neh. 8:3, 8, 18; Eph. 3:4; Col. 4:16; Rev 1:3; etc.). Are we obedient to the Lord’s will, then? How are we doing at this? The apostle Paul told Timothy, “Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching” (I Tim. 4:13). Could we say we are doing the same? If not, why not?

Why Read The Bible?

Why ought we spend time reading the Bible when we could be reading the newspaper, or other written materials? Put simply, because when we read the Bible, we are allowing our minds to access the very words that were “breathed-out” (inspired) by God (II Tim. 3:16-17). No other work can make this claim and be telling the truth. In connection with this, we are allowed access to the very mind of God, because it is His revelation which has been “breathed-out” when we read the word (I Cor. 2:7-16; II Pet. 1:20-21)!

Furthermore, we need to read because it is by reading God’s word that we obtain wisdom (Ps. 119:98-100), and can cleanse our way (Ps. 119:9, 11).

It is this same written word that is described as a sword (Eph. 6:18), and a fire, and a hammer (Jer. 23:29). In fact, when we study about the spiritual armor that Christians must wear (Eph. 6:13-18), we will find that every piece has a connection with the written word!

So, why read the Bible? How could we not? How can we deprive ourselves of the spiritual knowledge and strength that God has provided? Yet, it is done day by day by the masses of people on earth! (Hosea 4:6)

Conclusion

Friends, how are you answering this most important question? How regular and systematic are we in reading the Scriptures? If we are not doing this, then why not?

What excuse do we think God will accept from us for not reading His word?

STILL FIGHTING SIN?

Steve Wallace (The Way of Truth & Life, May 27, 2012; St. Leon, IN)

This is an important question. *Are you still fighting sin?* Let us consider the brethren at Corinth. Paul writes that some of them had been fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, abusers of themselves with men (homosexuals, sw), thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, or extortioners (1 Cor. 6:9-11). *Imagine what a struggle it was for them to come out of such sins!* We admire such conviction, such resolve, such a change of conduct. This is repentance. This the gospel at work in one's life (2 Cor. 7:8-11).

In spite of the past evil he had provoked, the devil was not finished with the Christians at Corinth and he will never be finished with us. After winning such a battle against sin as that which we noted above we read of Paul implying that they needed to keep on fighting it. This time in the form of jealousy and strife, tolerating immorality in their brethren, who they chose for companions, and in a number of other manifestations (1 Cor. 3:3; 5:1; 15:33).

In truth, temptation to sin in some form or fashion will continue to plague all faithful Christians (1 Pet. 5:8,9). Let us all remember and put on the armor the Lord has provided (Eph. 6:10-20) and recall the "great cloud of witnesses" we have in faithful saints of the Bible (Heb. 11:1-12:1).

Further, let us keep in mind the many Christians in the first century, in addition to the Corinthians, who demonstrate the need for continually fighting sin. We consider only a few here.

- Ananias and Saphira (Acts 5:1-11)
- Simon the sorcerer (Acts 8:18-24)
- Judaizers (Acts 15:5)
- Peter (Gal. 2:11-13)
- The Galatians (1:6; 5:7)
- The brethren addressed in the epistle to the Hebrews (2:1,3; 5:11; 10:25; 12:12,13)
- Diotrophes (3 Jno. 9,10)

"Let us therefore give diligence to enter into that rest, that no man fall after the same example of disobedience" (Heb. 4:11). *Keep fighting sin!*

WHY GO TO WORSHIP?

(Author Unknown; The Way of Truth & Life, Apr 29, 2012; St. Leon, IN)

A churchgoer wrote a letter to the editor of a newspaper and complained that it made no sense to go to church every week. "I've gone for 30 years now", he wrote, "and in that time I have heard something like 3,000 sermons. But for the life of me, I can't remember a single one of them. So I think I'm wasting my time..."

This started a controversy in the "letters to the Editor" column, much to the delight of the editor. It went on for weeks until someone wrote this clincher: "I've been married for 30 years now. In that time my wife has cooked some 32,000 meals. But for the life of me, I cannot recall the entire menu for a single one of those meals. But I know this they all nourished me and gave me the strength I needed to do my work. If my wife had not given me these meals, I would be physically dead today. Likewise, if I had not gone to church for nourishment, I would be spiritually dead today!"

Editor's Note: Here are the verses which make this illustration meaningful—

But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. (John 4:23)

And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.
(Hebrews 10:24-25)

Oh come, let us sing to the LORD! Let us shout joyfully to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving; let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms. For the LORD is the great God, and the great King above all gods.

(Ps.95:1-3)