

Caring Creator

*Is God involved in human life?
Is he concerned about the earth?
Does God care about you, personally?*

Meditation Text: Genesis 1:2

Suggested Reading: Ecclesiastes 11:9–12:8

Now that we've met our Maker, we naturally would like to know more about him. What kind of God is he? Is he a God far away "watching us from a distance" as the song goes? We know he is almighty for he has the power to speak things into existence, but does this omnipotent God give thought to the creatures he has made? He is so high and heavenly and holy, and we are so low and earthly and stained with sin—why would he concern himself with humanity? Besides, I am just one of more than 8 billion individuals on the globe—surely I cannot expect the Almighty to have a care for me, can I?

The Sharing God

Yes you can! For God your Creator pays attention to all his creatures with care and love. How do we know this? It

starts to become clear when we reflect on this question: why did God create the universe? Did God *need* to create the world? Was there some kind of issue or problem that required solving? The answer must be “no” because nothing existed besides God and has no need of anything (Ps 90:2). God is perfect and complete and is always fully content within himself.

That’s quite different from ourselves, right? We humans and in fact all creatures are fully dependent on things outside of ourselves. We like to think we are self-sufficient but the truth is we need oxygen, food, shelter, and clothing. We need human companionship, love, and support. Anyone starved of these things lives in misery—if he lives at all. Most of all we need God. But God doesn’t need us, does he? Paul states as much in Acts 17:25: “nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything.” God could have continued in perfect bliss if he had never created anything.

What then is the act of creation but an act of pure grace on God’s part? He created all things not for his benefit but for that of his creatures! Not to satisfy a personal longing but rather to share himself, to share his goodness and love with others. God created so that all of creation might know him as the wonderful, marvellous God he is! And he especially had in mind that we humans might live under his blessing and be filled with joy in fellowship with this divine being who is good, wise, just, holy, and filled with steadfast love. *We* exist, the *world* exists as a gift from God, so doesn’t it follow that if we ever have a need we can freely ask him to fill it?

Fitting Response

But then you must also give the Creator your love in return, your undivided devotion. A lot of people have forgotten their Creator and live as if he’s not there or as if they have nothing to do with him. Some acknowledge God’s

existence but treat God as if he is lucky to have them around. Some by their attitude or their actions hold God at arm's length and try to restrict him to a part of their lives, like attending church on Sunday or a Bible study. But for the other parts of their lives, the Creator is shut-out. He's not invited in and he's given no say over what we do there—it's so easy to do that, isn't it?

Each of us must come under God's microscope here: Do you and I give thought to our Creator in *all* aspects of our lives? God created you, the world, and everything in it including labour, relationships, and even leisure—do you keep God in mind at work and/or school and inside the four walls of your home? Inside the privacy of your bedroom, do you live and act under the eye of your Creator? What about in the realm of your thoughts? Do you reckon with Almighty God who made every atom in your body, and consciously aim to think, speak, and act in submission to his will? Or are you harbouring sin in part of your life, convinced that no one knows or will ever find out?

Too late. Your Creator has known all along and it's to him that you will have to render an account. *Now* is the time to confess that sin and repent, for as Scripture elsewhere exhorts us, “Walk in the ways of your heart and the sight of your eyes. But know that for all these things God will bring you into judgment. . . . Remember (also) your Creator in the days of your youth” (Eccl 11:9; 12:1). God didn't create this world so that it could despise him or keep him at bay. A day of judgment is coming—are you ready? Am I? We will be if we willingly give our heart to our matchless Creator and live joyfully under his devoted care.

Hovering Spirit

Genesis 1:2 may seem rather strange and hard to understand, “The earth was without form and void and darkness was upon the face of the deep.” Some commentators think this describes a state of initial chaos, the result of a battle between good and evil, the aftermath

of Satan's fall into sin. They think God had to overcome some powerful evil before he could go on. Another time we hope to come back to the creation of Satan, the angels, and heaven itself,¹ but for now let's clarify that what verse 2 describes is simply an empty, lonesome, earth. "Without form and void" means that it was blank—no vegetation, no animals, no humans, no light. It was uninhabitable. Scripture elsewhere says that God is "not a God of confusion but of peace" (1 Cor 14:33) so God certainly didn't create a chaos of competing powers. Very simply, he created the heavens and the earth in their basic shape but without the host of particulars that came later. Like a sculptor starts with a lump of clay and makes something out of it, so God called into existence the "lump" of the universe and then proceeded to make something out of it, adding in new things over the following days.

Darkness was upon the face of "the deep" which refers to the oceans of waters. But something or better *someone* else was over those waters too, "And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters" (v. 2). When you put this together with John 1:1 what we find here in the opening verses of Scripture is that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit were all equally involved in this great work of creation!

The Spirit is described as "hovering" over the oceans. This verb is rare in Scripture and it is used with a certain nuance. For example, in Deuteronomy 32:11 a mother eagle is described as "hovering over its young" (NIV). You see, a mama eagle has to teach the little eagle babies to fly. To do that, she will nudge them out of the warm nest. Eagles, of course, make their nests way up in tall trees or on mountain cliffs. It's a long way down. But the little ones have to learn, so mama stirs them up out of the nest so that they tumble headlong to the ground. As they fall, the eaglets instinctively begin to flap their wings and learn to fly. But if anything

¹ See Chapter 10, "Heaven."

should go wrong; if the eaglet doesn't quite get it or if there's any danger, then mama is prepared to swoop down and catch the baby bird up on her wings and take him back to safety—that's why she *hovers*. The hovering of the mama eagle is motivated by deep concern and care for her young.

And that's the sense of things here too. The Holy Spirit is not just idly passing time but in his hovering over the waters he is actively caring for creation. He is watching over it, even upholding it so that nothing falls apart. And what precisely is it that God's Spirit cares so much for? An earth which was "without form and void"—empty space covered in darkness! If the Holy Spirit cares so much for an unformed and uninhabitable world where there is no life whatsoever, how much more do you think he cares for this world that is now teeming with manifold creatures and abundant plant life? And how much more do you think he cares for you, a child redeemed by the Son and chosen by the Father for everlasting life?

Devoted Creator

For the truth is, we've ruined the Creator's good creation with our sin. We'll hear about that later in Genesis 3 but it's a story—a true story—we know all too well. We insulted and offended God with our choice to disobey his command and because of that sin, the universe has become corrupted. And yet our Creator has not abandoned us and destroyed us, as was his right to do. Instead, as we read in John 1:3–5, the Word (Jesus Christ) who is God and without whom "nothing was made that has been made" has come to help. "In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not overcome it." Do you know what that means? The Creator chose to do the unthinkable and enter into his own creation in order to shine saving light into our spiritual darkness! He came in order to bring salvation to sinners.

Let's think about what God is doing: the Father *created* this world through his Son; when the world fell into

darkness through our sin, he *redeemed* this world through his Son (John 3:16); and now he has given his Son the Spirit to pour out on his people (Acts 2:33) in order to work toward the full *restoration* of the same heavens and the earth—that makes this world worth our time and effort, doesn't it? Yes, sin is here, and we must toil against it, but sin has been overcome in Christ and will be removed from this creation upon his return in glory.

You can live and work under that blessing and sure hope. Remember your Creator: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. There's no one like him in power, grace, and love. He's already given himself to you. Won't you give yourself to him?

Further Reflection

1. What does it mean that the Creator wishes to share himself (i.e. have fellowship) with his people? Discuss the experiences of the following:
 - a. Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden (as implied in Gen 3:8).
 - b. The Israelites in the tabernacle (Exod 25:1–9).
 - c. The Jews in the sending of God's Son (John 1:1–14).
 - d. Believers in the new heaven and earth (Rev 21:1–8).
2. How can you share yourself (i.e. have fellowship) with God? What does the LORD desire of you in this respect? (See Deut 6:4–5; 10:12–13; 2 Cor 1:5; 1 John 1:1–7).
3. Give examples from Scripture that show the LORD's care for
 - a. his creation (living and non-living things; e.g. Deut 20:19–20; 25:4).
 - b. his covenant people.
 - c. non-covenant (Gentile) people?
 - d. you personally?

4. We can wonder what will happen to all our labour on this earth—for instance, the development of technology, the arts, business, science, medicine, etc.—when Christ comes back and ushers in the new heavens and the new earth. Will our work and culture-making disappear or might it in some way continue on? What does the Bible indicate? (See Ps 90, esp. vv. 13–17 & 1 Cor 15:58).