

We Believe in God  
Genesis 1:1, Romans 1:20-22

### **Slide 1**

Genesis 1:1, *“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”*

When asked, *“What do we believe?”* we, as Christians, who claim to be saved, tend to stumble or heeemm and haaaw.

Many of us can't even give a decent testimony of how our belief in Jesus has changed us, that's assuming we're changed at all.

We're even hard press to define what our relationship with God, the Creator of the universe, is like. In fact, many so-called Christians have beliefs that are completely non-Biblical.

For example: Many believe that there're many roads to heaven. Not so, there's only one way and His name is Jesus.

Many say, *“We all worship the same God.”* Not so, our God bears little resemblance to the gods of Islam, Mormonism, Jehovah Witnesses, and we'll not even consider the god and gods of Hindus, Buddhists, and Shintos.

Some say, *“Being religious and going to church saves us.”* The fact is, by itself, being religious and going to church doesn't “save” anyone.

You can be an active member of a church and still be without Christ and still be dead in your sins.

Now, it does help and points the way because you can't be a growing Christian without being an active member of a church.

But there's still going to be a lot of church members in Hell one day. Only those with a personal relationship and a personal knowledge in Jesus will be saved.

Many people say they've read the Bible, yet they're hard pressed to give any significant details about what they claimed to have read.

Which is true since the Bible can't be properly understood without the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Another example of a Christian misconception is that many claim they're fully justified in all they do since they do it in the name of "love" since 1 John 4:8b, says "*God is love.*"

But here's the problem: The Bible's definition, hence God's definition, of love isn't the same as the world's definition.

The fact is, what the Bible calls "*the lust of the flesh,*" the world calls "*love.*" Remember, I'm talking about those who call themselves Christians.

Unfortunately, the examples are endless and, because of this and what I see as a failing of the church in America today, we need to know, as professing Christians, what we believe.

We need to go back to the basics. We need to examine just what it is that we profess to believe and it all starts and finishes in the Word, the holy Scriptures, the Bible.

The series I'm beginning today is titled, "What Do We Believe" starting with our belief in the one true and only God.

Then, in the weeks to come, I'll move on to the Scriptures upon which we base all our beliefs. Then I'll talk about Jesus, the Holy Spirit, our need for salvation, God's grace, and finally the Body of Christ.

When I finish this series we'll be into the Christmas messages.

## **Slide 2**

So, what do we believe about God. According to the latest Gallup polls, belief in God, by Americans, has dipped to 81%, which is the lowest level since the question was first asked in 1944.

This may seem high compared to Europe where, according to a 2018 Pew poll, only 26% say they believed in the God of the Bible, and an additional 36% just believe in a "higher power,".

The statistics of the Gallup poll were broken down by age groups: for example, not surprising is that only 68% of adults, 18-29, say they believe in God compared with 87% of Americans who are 65 and older.

Also, of those that self-identify as Democrats only 72% believe in God compared with 92% of those who identify as Republicans.

This poll only asked about a belief in God with only yes, no, or no opinion as the only options. It wasn't concerned if the person was a committed Christian or not.

Gorge Barna and his research group said in a 2021 report that the term "Christian" is now just a generic label.

Of the 2,000 U.S. adults surveyed, in the Barna study

- 69% self-identified as Christian, yet of that group...
  - 72% say people are basically good (not true according to Bible teachings, (Jerimiah 17:9)
  - 64% say all religious faiths have equal value
  - 58% say people can get to heaven by performing good works and,
  - 57% believe in karma.

The broader group of self-identified Christians also tend to reject several biblical teachings.

For example:

- 46% say God's plan for marriage involves one man and one woman
- 32% say premarital sex is morally unacceptable.

About one-third of those surveyed identify themselves as either born-again or evangelical Christians.

Barna said, *"Despite using different terminology to identify themselves, self-identified born-again and self-identified evangelical Christians possess nearly identical views on most of the beliefs evaluated."*

Yet even among those believers:

- 62% say the Holy Spirit is symbolic, not real;
- 61% say all faiths are equally valuable; and
- 60% say people can get to heaven by performing good works.

The article goes on to say the among those who self-identify as Christian, fewer than 6% hold to a hold a Biblical worldview and consistently apply Biblical principles to their lives.

We have a real problem in America today. The people who claim to know God have no clue Who He is. No wonder this nation is in a mess.

Those who claim to know God don't, and we've allowed our nation to put God out of everything because He no longer matters. Look at our focal passage that I read at the beginning of this message.

It didn't start out:

- "In the beginning, the earth was without form and void." Or,

- “In the beginning, monkeys became human and walked in the garden.” Or,
- “In the beginning when the sun and solar system evolved.” Or,
- “In the beginning in a galaxy far, far, away.”

No! It simply says, “*In the beginning God...*” So, let’s just start here. It’s interesting the Bible assumes the existence of God and doesn’t try to prove it, therefore neither will I.

My purpose this morning is to help you understand the ramifications of God’s existence, to know Who this God is. Before there was anything else, there was God.

The existence of God is our starting point. If God exists, and indeed He does, what is the ramification on our lives, on our very existence.

These first four words of the Bible, “*In the beginning God...*” form the foundation of our faith. Believe these words, and you can believe all that follows in the Bible.

This is where most of the world runs into problems. Even for those who profess a belief in God, most of those people don’t understand the implications of such a belief.

For starters the Bible tells us that God has very clearly made His existence known. Look at Romans 1:18-19

Romans 1:18–19, “*The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them.*”

The Bible’s clear. God will deal severely with those who don’t acknowledge His being. Yes, God’s a God of love, but make no mistake, He’s also a God of wrath to those who reject Him.

### Slide 3

Another thing we must understand is that God's name for Himself deals with His existence.

Exodus 3:14, *"God said to Moses, 'I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'"*

Translators have a difficult time translating this phrase because it can be interpreted in so many ways:

I Am the Pre-Existing One

I Will Be What I Will Be

I Am that I Am

God's very name for Himself proclaims His existence. We cannot begin to please God unless we sincerely believe His existence.

Hebrews 11:6, *"And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him."*

How many people really seek God? How many really search for Him? Jeremiah 29:13, *"You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart."*

Here is part of the problem in America today. Our prosperity is literally killing us. Since we have so much, we have no need for God, so why search for Him?

But the fact is, God has made Himself known, the God of the Bible is involved in human history.

Romans 1:20, *“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 people are without excuse.”*

How can you stand in a dark open field on clear night, observing all the stars and not praise God, or witness a magnificent sunrise or sunset, or see the beauty of fall colors across a mountain range.

Those who are spiritual and attuned to the things of God will break out in praise as the hymnist wrote:

*“O Lord, my God, when I in awesome wonder  
Consider all the worlds Thy Hands have made  
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder  
Thy power throughout the universe displayed  
Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to Thee  
How great Thou art, how great Thou art.”*

God has been revealed in the natural world around us. He has shown *“His eternal power and divine nature”* to us. Theologians call this “Natural Revelation.”

It’s through Natural Revelation that God has revealed His existence to all people, but, even though this is limited, it’s sufficient to even the most primitive among us to acknowledge that there’s a God who created it all.

Yet, Natural Revelation isn’t enough to tell someone how to approach God and Natural Revelation can’t provide salvation. So, there’s Special Revelation.

In Special Revelation, God has revealed Himself more fully to us through His Word, the Holy Scriptures, through which we find Jesus, the only means of salvation.

Herein is another fact the world doesn't like. Jesus is not a way to be saved, He is the only way to be saved.

But in the natural world, God still has revealed Himself in such a way to hold all people accountable. His attributes have been clearly seen and in Romans 1:19 we read: "*God has made it plain to them.*"

#### **Slide 4**

Now going back to the first verse in the Bible. Genesis 1:1, "*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*"

God created it all. He owns it all, therefore we're answerable to Him. But man doesn't want to be subjected to anyone but himself. Today, even science completely disregards the supernatural, that's God.

In fact, today in the science world, if you use the word "God" or the notion of a divine creator, it's dismissed as NOT science, but considered as superstition or merely religion, not a part of science.

The theory of evolution is just man's attempt to eliminate any need for God.

Dr. George Wald, a Harvard professor and the winner of the 1967 Nobel Peace Prize, stated, "*When it comes to the origin of life on this earth, there are only two possibilities—creation or spontaneous generation—there is no third way. Spontaneous generation was disproved 100 years ago, but that leads us to only one other conclusion: that of supernatural creation. We cannot accept that on philosophical grounds, therefore choose to believe the impossible, that life arose spontaneously by chance.*"

So, for Dr George Wald and many in the world of science today, the Scriptures say, "*so that they are without excuse*" and thereby subject to the wrath of God.



Furthermore, we read in Romans 1:21–22, *“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. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools.”*

The Bible uses the word “fool” to describe those who don’t believe. Psalm 14:1, *“The fool says in his heart, “There is no God.”*

The word “fool” in Biblical terms means more than just a person who lacks good sense or sound judgment. It means a moral degenerate, someone who’s worthless and godless.

Paul writes, paraphrasing from the same Psalm in Romans 3:11–12, *“There is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one.”*

Therefore, the cold, hard fact, as stated in the Scriptures, is that we cannot go to God on our own terms.

## **Slide 5**

### Conclusion

But there’s good news, since man failed to seek after God, God came seeking after him.

John 3:16, *“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that who soever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”*

God sent Jesus and, as we’ll see in a later message, Jesus is God in the flesh.

Colossians 1:15, *“The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.”*

The Bible's quite clear, Jesus is Lord. So, the fact remains, regardless if God is acknowledged or not, a day is coming when all will proclaim Jesus as Lord.

Philippians 2:10–11, *“That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”*

What's critical is who'll bow the knee and proclaim Jesus as Lord today? Don't buy the lie! Much of the world believes in some sort of god, I'm just not sure we believe in the same God.

The god of the Muslims, the god of Mormons, the god of Jehovah Witnesses, the god and gods of the Hindus, Buddhists, Shinto's, is the not the true God we worship.

Our God is:

- The God of Creation
- The God of wrath
- A Holy God Who'll bring justice to the world, but also...
- A God of love,
- The God of our Salvation, and
- The God Who's at work in our world today.

God isn't an inactive God Who sets things in motion, then sits back and watches what happens. God's active in His creation today as well as in times past. God is the Beginning and the End.

God is all powerful, all knowing, all present, and He's unchanging, He's eternally the same.

Because He is God, He makes the rules and they have never changed. He alone determines right and wrong, not us. We all are answerable to Him.

God desires a personal relationship with His creation through His son Jesus Christ. What is your answer to Him today?