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Introduction

You don't have to teach much Scripture in a local primary school until you come across one of the most common question that kids ask you. Who made God?

You want to teach them about God, you want to introduce them to God's Son Jesus, you want to help them to know God better but their minds are often somewhere else. How did God come about? Where did he come from? What were things like before God was made. Mister Taylor, Who made God?

And I think it's a great question. For whoever made God must be greater than God. And if no-one made God, then how did God get there in the first place?

When the kids are a little older, you can say to them, let me ask you a question before I answer your question. How was the world made? "That's easy Mr Taylor, two planets came together in a big bang and formed the world. So how did those planets get there? Rocks came together to form the planets. How did the rocks get there? Particles came together to form rocks? How did the particles get there? Atoms clumped together to make particles? How did the atoms get there? I don't know... maybe they were always there!

You see when you come to the beginnings, the beginning of life, the beginning of the universe, the beginning of time, something must have been there. Something. Because we know that something can't come out of nothing. That's impossible. So something must have been there. Scientist may say it was some atoms, or heat or a force. I will say it must be God. There must be a higher force, a higher power that started it all off. There must be. There is no other logical explanation.

But what is that God like? Why did he make this world? Where does man fit in? These questions can't be answered by the scientists, God is going to have to reveal these things to us. And he has. In the book of Genesis. Written most likely 3,500 years ago by the old testament great Moses, this book gives us some foundational truths that help us answer these most important questions.

And the first sentence of the first chapter of the first book of the Bible starts with a bang. "*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*" That is the Bible's foundational truth. That is the basis that everything else will be built upon. It doesn't start by trying to prove God or talk about who made God. It doesn't spell out in intricate detail, like a science textbook, how everything was made. It simply says "*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*" So the Bible lays its cards on the table, it wants us teach us about a

1. Big God.

A big God who is majestic! A God who made everything, the heavens and the earth, the sky and the sea, the animals, the insects, the fish, the birds and even me. This majestic God only has to speak and his words achieve what he wants. You see God doesn't have to get the elements together in his Bunsen burner. He doesn't have to mix and match the chemicals and the atoms and the rocks together.

No this God says let there be light and there is light. Let there be lights in the sky, let the land produce living plants, let us make man in our image. He only has to say these things and they happen.

Around the time that Moses wrote this book there were other early stories of creation which put man in the director's chair, and portrays God as merely an evolved being, limited in power, and left on the sidelines. In stark contrast, the Bible's story opens with the words; "In the beginning... *God.*" God's in the director's chair - He calls the shots. He's the Divine Artist - the Designer of the design. The Creator of the creation. The maker of the world. We have a majestic and all powerful God.

And yet we have a mysterious God as well. Because he doesn't tell us how he did it. How did he make it? Was it in six 24 hour days or over 6 periods of time, maybe millions of years? How can God make light on day 1 and only make the sun on Day 4? Did life evolve from single celled objects onto the complexity of human beings? Or are we nothing like the other animals.

It is mysterious, because none of us were there when it happened. But I am a great believer in taking the simple meaning of the text and believing it until I come up with a better explanation from the rest of Scripture. And when I do that I see God making the world not through evolution, but through 6 days, which most likely means 6 - 24 hour days periods of time, where bit by bit he filled the earth, with man being the high point of creation.

Although there are many Christians who believe in some form of evolution, God making the world and evolution filling it, I am not convinced that is what the Bible is saying here. And I think we need to start with the Bible and science can help explain that, rather than starting from science and letting the Bible explain the Scientist. But likewise I don't think it is necessary for your salvation to believe in 6, 24 hour periods of time. So if someone disagrees with me, it is not the be all and end all. But if they do, can I suggest, they are introducing an error that will infiltrate their thinking and will lead to errors elsewhere in their beliefs, especially in their view of how we look at mankind and how we look at God as well.

And so we have a majestic God, a mysterious God and yet in these chapters we see a methodical God as well. Because as we read through Genesis 1 we see an order, a pattern, a structure in how the world was made. Just as I go through a routine every

morning of getting up, getting the kids breakfast, making my toast and orange juice and then getting a coffee and going downstairs to work, so God goes through the same routine on each of the 6 days that are described.

Each day starts with God talking, “let something happen“. It then happens and it is described as good. He names the objects created and then it is evening and the end of the day. But the pattern is even stronger than that. For in the first three days God separates and then in the next three days he fills. So days 1, 2 and 3 God separates the light from the darkness, the waters from the heavens, the dry earth from the seas. And in days 4, 5 and 6 he fills the light and the darkness with the sun and the moon, he fills the waters with fish and the sky with birds, and he fills the earth with animals and then with us, human beings.

Its all very methodical. Which I find extremely interesting. Because if it wasn't ordered or methodical then science couldn't investigate it, examine it and describe what was happening. If God made the world where gravity sometimes happened, if the sun occasionally rose when it felt like it, then science would fall apart. It needs patterns and categories and order to work. Its what drives the scientist out of the armchair and into their laboratory.

God is majestic, mysterious, methodical and mind boggling. Because he make it all out of nothing. He is the director of a vast universe. He is intimately involved in all of the world's creatures. Even with mankind he gets his hands dirty so to speak, making us out of the dust of the earth and out of the rib of the first man. God must be an amazing artist. For he has filled the canvas of life with such colour, life and vibrancy. He is a big God.

And yet our world thinks it is just one accident. It just happened. By a fluke of nature, we turned out the way we turned out. That the Earth's rotation just happened to be at the right pace, that we just by luck were no closer or further from the sun. That the Oxygen/Nitrogen ratio just happened to right to support life, that the Ozone layer was fortunately the right size. And because they think it just happened, they turn their back on a big, big God and put themselves at the centre of the universe.

It reminds me of the story of a certain bunch of scientists who came to God one day. They said, “Well, God, we've finally done it. We truly have no use for you anymore. We have figured out how to make man out of the dirt, just like you did.”

God said, “Really? What do you say we have a man-making contest, okay?”

And the scientists said, “You're on.”

So one of the scientists bent over to grab some of the dirt, to which God says, “Wait just a minute. You go make your own dirt.”

Guys, we can't even make dirt our own dirt out of nothing, let alone make mankind or the world. No God is a big God

2. Who made us a big world.

A world that is dependent upon God's word. A world that is subject to God's word. God speaks and it comes to pass. God names the objects. God communicates to mankind. This is a God where the creation needs to listen to the creator. Where the canvas is controlled by the artist, where the saucepan is under the direction of the chef.

The world is subject to the divine word. The sun and moon and stars do the bidding of their creator. The fish and the animals are only given life at the plan of their Master. Even us, man and woman are here because God wanted someone like himself. Someone who could understand His words and follow His commands. And when God first made the world, that was exactly what happened.

For the world is a relational world. It is not like the picture that Isaac Newton put forward of a divine clockmaker who merely wound the whole thing up and has left it to tick down by itself. No there is a relationship between God and his world. And as we will see a little bit later there is a special relationship between God and his final creation, mankind.

And when God made it that way, it was good. For the last thing that God saw on everyday of creation was that his creation was good. I can imagine him leaning back and in a good ocker accent saying "Boy, she's a beauty."

The world was made a beautiful place, a wonderful place, a fulfilling place. You see the picture is here of a God in complete control, with no competition, no rivals. He has made this world, through his word. That's how awesome he is! He doesn't get his hammer and chisel out - God is so much in control that all he has to do is speak and it comes into being. And he has made this world for

3. A big task.

And to bring about that purpose, at the end of the whole process, at its summit, its zenith, God makes man and woman. But you notice in one way they are just like the other animals. They are a creature, designed to live on this earth. They are not made first, but by the time we appear on the scene, there are already fish and birds and animals and spiders. Thus the world is not just made for us.

So we aren't here to rape and pillage the earth of its resources. We are not here to grow richer and more self sufficient at the expense of God's other creatures. In fact when God made us humans he gave us a big task, a mammoth task even. To rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air. To look after God creation for him. To be his representatives here, his vice regent, his governor-general so to speak..

God made the world and all its animals not for us, but for Him. At the end of the creative process the end product is not the man and his wife, sitting in a jucuse having abused the world around them. No the end point is God enjoying rest, peace, shalom. It is a

perfect balance of relationships between God and man, God and the world. God and the animals. And mankind is invited to join God in that rest, in that balance, in those perfect relationships. But not at the expense of the rest of God's creation.

So man is a creature but also man is a special creature, the end product so to speak. The final jigsaw piece needed. For Genesis 1 says that he was made in God's own image. We are like God in some way or another. We are to reflect his likeness to a world that can't see God. They can't see Him as we can't see Him, but they can see God in us. They see his reflected glory. They understand his servant leadership. They get to know his desire for deep and meaningful relationships. Because at the pinnacle of his creation, stands one who is like Him.

So yes we are a creature, but at the same time we are also like our creator. We are made in the very image of God. We are made to reflect God's likeness. God's creation is to look to us and see in us what God is like & how he operates. It is a bit like Samuel. Samuel is like his parents. If you feel his hands and feet they are always sweaty like his Dad. If you look at his eyes, they are dark like his Mums. And when he grows up we will see his personality has similarities with his parents.

Similarly we are God's children. He made us and so we are to reflect his likeness. Not that we look like God. Instead we should act like God. We were made to run this world on God's behalf, under God's guidance and with God's strength. Thus we need to follow his rules, live by his ways, so that we can look after all the good things that he has given us.

You know we often ask ourselves Why am I here? We often think about the purpose of life? Often younger people and older people wonder what to themselves why am I here? But do you know, if you just believe in the big bang and in evolution, these questions will confuse you. If you are a product of chance - that is two planets happened to collide and form this world, if you are only here through luck because some ape many millions ago happened to stumble across human qualities. If you are a result of natural selection. Then its a dog eat dog world. Then its a matter of the strong ruling the weak. It is a matter of buying the next lotto ticket because chance rules.

But if you believe in a Creator, then you know that you are here for a purpose. If you believe you are made in God's image, then your task is to show others what God is like. If you are here to rule the world on God's behalf, then that shows you that God trusts you, that he places his responsibility in your heart. It means you have a reason to get up each morning and go to school or go to work or to live life. Your aim in life is to reflect God's likeness and by doing that it will bring him the glory and the praise that he deserves as the Creator of this world.

What a big task that God has given us. For it's a big world out there, made by a very, very, very big God. Every morning you might put on your clothes and see the tag, "Made in China." Yet if you think about it every morning we have a tag attached to us that says, "Made by God." And another one that says "Made for God".

Which I think leaves us with a big question. Are we going to acknowledge these facts? Because if we do, it has to affect what we do. If there are just atoms and molecules and rocks and energy then we can afford to leave God out of our everyday life. If its all a matter of chance, of survival of the fittest. If there is no God, you and I are wasting our time this morning/evening. We're fools. We should be out eating, drinking and making merry. We only have one shot at life, so lets make the most of it. Spin the dice of life, consider the odds and just go for it. Just do it. Make the most of your short time here on earth.

But if you are made by God and made for God, that would be the height of stupidity, wouldn't it? To turn our back on our maker. To live as if all there was is physical stuff. To walk through life and live it as if there was no creator. To ignore the tasks that we were specially put together for. Wow that would be a wasted life, a pitiful life, a chasing after the wind, as one person has put it.

If there is a big God, then he wants you to continue to be his representative. To look after his world. To listen and follow his word. To enjoy his rest and his blessings, to seek his rest, to enjoy the relationships that he has put around us.

Yet Genesis 1 has started with a bang. But the biggest bang is reserved for inside our heads. And the question is what will you and I do about it?

