



Thinking Right About God



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To Cherry,
beautiful in countenance,
pure in life,
gentle in spirit,
subdued in emotion,
wise in counsel,
and patient in trial.





Also written by Frank Chesser

The Spirit of Liberalism
Portrait of God
Voyage of Faith





CONTENTS

Foreword	6
Acknowledgments	8
Introduction	9
1 The Being of God	11
2 The Nature of God	17
3 God and Man	53
4 God, Sin, and Redemption	65
5 God, Elders, and Shepherding	79
6 God, Preachers, and Preaching	107
7 God and Prejudice	141
8 God and Capital Punishment	157
9 God and the Censorious Eye	167
10 God and the Home	173
11 God and the Compartmental Gospel	195
12 God and the Remnant	205



FOREWORD

“In the beginning God . . .” These words, among the first we learn from the Bible as children, are perhaps the most profound in all of sacred literature. Who can fathom the mysteries or fully plumb the depths of divine truth contained in this seemingly simple phrase? The heart thrills and the mind staggers at the introduction of the first book of Moses. While the secret things belong to God, revealed truth has been graciously bestowed to man. If we are to please Him in this life and reach heaven in the next, it is crucial that we learn to think correctly about our Maker. Before we can “fear God, and keep his commandments,” we must come to know Him: His nature, His attributes, and the expectations He entertains for His creation. *Thinking Right about God*, the latest book from the marvelous pen of Frank Chesser, is certain to help sincere seekers who carefully consider its pages.

I remember the first time I heard Frank Chesser preach. He was visiting my hometown of Piedmont, Alabama, to conduct a gospel meeting. I came prepared with the tools of an eager scribe, hoping to leave with a sermon I later could reproduce. His lesson that evening dealt with the heinousness of sin: the havoc it has wrought, the devastation it has left in its terrible wake. Just minutes into this powerful presentation, I put my pen and paper aside—it quickly became apparent that this brother uses words as an artist uses paint, and there would be no mimicking this master.

Those who have sat at his feet will surely agree that Frank Chesser possesses a rare ability to communicate. This God-given talent reaches beyond the spoken word and extends to the printed page. In describing the talents of Moses E. Lard, one of the finest writers to emerge from the Restoration Movement, Wayne Jackson said he “had a flare with words that soared.” Given the brilliant word-pictures he frequently paints,



the same can be said of Frank Chesser. To read from his pen is to be transported to an earlier era, as the beauty of his language is eclipsed only by the profundity of its meaning. The cadences of his words resonate almost musically in the ear, while the spiritual truths they seek to inculcate are carefully embedded in honest hearts.

Thinking Right about God guides us time and again through the corridors of sacred history, as the author lays “precept upon precept; line upon line” (Isaiah 28:10, 13). When its final page has been turned, the reader has relived many triumphs and tragedies of Bible heroes and villains—and, most important, he has gained a glimpse into the throbbing heart and the penetrating mind of the Almighty God.

—Brandon Refroe





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May the divine truths pressed herein instruct and edify all who read it.





INTRODUCTION

“The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork” (Ps. 19:1), but they are void of the mind of God. They speak and their voice is heard throughout the earth (Ps. 19:2–4), but they have not sat in the council of God and are unable to address man’s mind with God’s mind.

Only the Bible can speak to the mind of man. The Bible is the mind of God in verbal form. It discloses the way God thinks. It addresses man’s intellect, the thinking, reasoning, contemplative aspect of man’s nature. God designed the mind of man. Apart from divine revelation, man cannot know his own mind, much less the mind of God.

A man who traverses the road of life destitute of the mind and thinking of God possesses a mind that is “deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked” (Jer. 17:9). Since God fashioned it, only He can “search the heart” (Jer. 17:10) of man and inform him of its nature and needs.

A man cannot think the thoughts of God without God’s telling man what He thinks.

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts (Isa. 55:8–9).

Devoid of divine revelation, man is hopelessly adrift on the mindless sea of benightedness, “whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things” (Phil. 3:19).

Man must have the thinking of God in order to think right about both God and himself. Without the thoughts of God, man lives in incessant self-deception. The Bible is the teaching of the grace of God (Tit. 2:11). When allowed to have its way, it trains man’s mind to think right about God, “denying ungodli-



ness and worldly lust” and living “soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world” (Tit. 2:12).

When a man insists on his own “stubborn way” (Judg. 2:19), he makes it impossible for the mind of God to reach his mind and mold it to think the thoughts of God. He blinds his own eyes to see and perceive the ways of God. If a man is compelled by self-will, his mind is continually resistant to the mind of God. The desire to think right about God is the master key to discerning the thinking of God.





1

THE BEING OF GOD

“In the beginning God” (Gen. 1:1). What an affirmation! The feeble, finite mind of man reels and staggers under the load of this single thought. It compresses the mind with the weight of the universe. The reflective mind confesses its impotency in its attempt to cope with this singular assertion. It bows speechless before this monument of truth. This unexcelled declaration hammers the mind with fragmenting force. It moves down the corridors and into the rooms of man’s senses until every pore is replenished with inexpressible wonder. It is unfathomable in its content, immeasurable in its magnitude, and incomparable in its inclusion.

“In the beginning God” (Gen. 1:1). Who dares speak to this divine avowal? Can the Solomon-like minds of the ages contend with this pronouncement? Having contemplated the universe and just a few of its components and completed one’s journey through the mind of God in the biblical record, how many questions about “In the beginning God” remain unanswered? How many will forever remain unanswered? Will heaven be an endless question-and-answer session? Will man’s mind ever match the mind of God? Even in the eternal state of sinless perfection, could God in His omniscience and infiniteness speak to man in his finiteness, enabling man to understand all things? How deep and rich is the “wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!” (Rom. 11:33).

“In the beginning God” (Gen. 1:1). The contemplative mind is transfixed with these four words. Silver showers of thought





emanate from this divine averment, cascading over man's mind in a waterfall of perpetual wonderment. "I exceedingly fear and quake" (Heb. 12:21) depicts the rending asunder of Moses' mental and emotional being as he viewed God's descent upon Mount Sinai (Exod. 19). God's descent upon man's mind with this brief yet profound announcement leaves man thunderstruck with numbness and awe. Can the vocabularies of the earth do justice to this truth? Can the poetry of Shakespeare, the music of Beethoven, or the portraits of da Vinci appease the spiritual mind regarding the marvel of this truth?

"In the beginning God" (Gen. 1:1). The Bible does not argue for the existence of God; it simply announces it. The first four words of divine inspiration mark the commencement of time and an introduction to the greatest Being in all that is. Can man in the entirety of his self-assumed intellectual might assimilate these four simple words from the mind of God? Job thought he knew much about many things. From the bowels of poverty and ceaseless pain, immersed in massive grief over ten caskets, he allowed himself to be drawn into an arena of thought and speech into which no man should ever enter.

His accusations against God were heartless and cruel. Was Job thinking right about God when he accused Him of multiplying his wounds without cause (Job 9:17), laughing at the adversities of the innocent (9:23), oppressing him and marking him for destruction (10:3, 8), turning him over to the wicked (16:11), rending him into pieces (16:12), turning a deaf ear to his cries for help (19:7), filling his life with darkness and despair (19:8, 10), and not even allowing him sufficient time and relief to "swallow down my spittle"? (7:19). When Job's tirade ended, God declared that he had darkened "counsel by words without knowledge" (38:2).

God proceeded to ask Job numerous questions for which he had no answer. Was Job prepared to contend with and instruct God? (Job 40:2). Job acknowledged his vileness and perceived the wisdom in silence (40:4). Could Job pursue and conquer the mighty behemoth (40:15) or leviathan? (41:1-4). Is a man ready to challenge God when he is incapable of answering a single question propounded by God or claiming victory over creatures of the earth void of mind and reason? Job confessed that he



had spoken in ignorance and bowed before God in penitence (42:3, 6). Regarding intellectual vigor, where are the “Jobs” of the earth? Is a man qualified to strive with God over the “God said” of the Bible when he is unable to unlock the mysteries of the first four words of God’s revelation to man?

“In the beginning God” (Gen. 1:1). These words traverse the meditative mind with such force that speech is supplanted by silent veneration. Golden arches of reverent emotion enclose the mind rendering in vain the entrance of mundane affairs of life. Birds migrate, bears hibernate, and bees pollinate. The arctic tern flies from pole to pole to breed and feed. Blessed with five eyes, a honeybee joins his fellow travelers in a hive, and they travel 55,000 collective miles to generate one pound of honey. Salmon live in salt water, then swim upstream to spawn and die in fresh water. Blue whales breed in the tropics, and then swim thousands of miles to feed in the icy waters of Antarctica. The prince of the night borrows its light from the sovereign of the day and gently sways the tides of the ocean.

The first human pair joined hands and hearts in the beauty and splendor of the paradise of Eden. They were as flawless in mind, body, and spirit as God Himself. They came together in marital intimacy under star-studded heavens, embraced by each other and the symphonic melody of the songs of the night. Their hearts beat together as one, flowing in an untainted stream of perfect love. They caressed one another with eyes and hands of impeccable purity. They worked as one in the utopia of Eden, dressing and keeping the garden as God designed, their hearts beating with ceaseless joy and swelling with deep, unblemished, personal affection to the highest degree of which man is capable of experiencing. Their voices blended in perfect unison, singing praises to Him on high who had created them and joined them in a state of marital bliss exceeding all subsequent unions for the whole of time. How can all of this be?

“In the beginning God” (Gen. 1:1). This one simple, yet profound phrase weaves webs of endless mystery around the mind of man. It would be easier for an ant to unravel the complexities of man than for a man to unlock the mysteries of God. Acceptance of “In the beginning God” negates any basis for denying a single subsequent syllable of divine revelation. God spoke



the universe with all of its intricate parts out of the womb of non-existence in six twenty-four hour days (Gen. 1; Exod. 20:8–11). He transported Enoch to Paradise (Gen. 5:24), and converted Lot's wife into a pillar of salt (Gen. 19:26). He immersed the earth in a global flood (Gen. 6–8), encased four cities in burning sulfur (Gen. 19), and extracted the power from fire to consume a bush (Exod. 3:2).

He converted a rod into a serpent and a serpent into a rod (Exod. 4:2–4), afflicted a healthy hand with leprosy and then healed it (Exod. 4:6–7), and ravaged mighty Egypt with ten plagues (Exod. 7–12). He led Israel with a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night (Exod. 13:21–22), severed the waters of the Red Sea (Exod. 14), sweetened the waters of Marah (Exod. 15:23–25), and rained bread from heaven (Exod. 16). He wrapped Mount Sinai in fire and smoke (Exod. 19:18), wrote ten commandments on stone (Exod. 32:15–16), and effaced two priests in a fiery death (Lev. 10:1–2). He plagued and healed Miriam of leprosy (Num. 12), buried three families in the bosom of the earth, and expunged 250 princes with fire (Num. 16).

He preserved Israel's clothes for forty years (Deut. 8:4), bred almonds on a rod (Num. 17), plucked water from a rock (Num. 20:8–11), and was the antidote for the poison of serpents (Num. 21:4–9). He divided the waters of Jordan (Josh. 3:12–17), leveled the walls of Jericho (Josh. 6), and destroyed an army with hail-stones (Josh. 10:11). He extended the life of a day (Josh. 10:12–14), consumed a meal with fire from a rock (Judg. 6:19–21), and worked two wonders with a fleece of wool (Judg. 6:36–40). He brought Samuel back to life (1 Sam. 28), revived Jeroboam's hand (1 Kings 13:6), brought food to Elijah on the wings of ravens (1 Kings 17:4–6), and prolonged the life of meal and oil (1 Kings 17:8–16).

He resurrected a widow's son (1 Kings 17:17–24), extirpated an altar with its sacrifice, wood, stones, dust, and water with fire (1 Kings 18:36–38), and slew 102 soldiers in Israel with fire from heaven (2 Kings 1). He took Elijah home in a whirlwind (2 Kings 2:11), partitioned the waters of Jordan a second time (2 Kings 2:14), and healed a miscarrying water source with salt (2 Kings 2:19–22). He multiplied a widow's oil to save her sons from financial bondage (2 Kings 4:1–7), restored to life the



Shunammite's son (2 Kings 4:32–37), and purified a contaminated pot of stew with meal (2 Kings 4:38–41).

He amplified a meal for twenty to satisfy the appetites of a hundred with leftovers (2 Kings 4:42–44), cured Naaman and afflicted Gehazi with the Syrian's leprosy (2 Kings 5), and floated the head of an axe on water (2 Kings 6:1–7). He stilled the troubled heart of Elisha's servant with fiery horses and chariots (2 Kings 6:17), blinded and then healed the Syrian host (2 Kings 6:18–20), and terrified the Syrian army with assumed battle cries of an approaching enemy (2 Kings 7:5–7). He raised a man when his dead body touched the lifeless frame of Elisha (2 Kings 13:20–21). He struck Uzziah with leprosy (2 Chron. 26:16–21), added fifteen years to Hezekiah's life (2 Kings 20:1–6), and confirmed His promised healing with a mighty sign (2 Kings 20:8–11).

He slew 185,000 Assyrian soldiers in one night (2 Kings 19:35), turned a national coalition of three armies against one another to their own destruction (2 Chron. 20:1–30), and afflicted Jehoram with an incurable disease (2 Chron. 21:12–19). He permitted Isaiah to behold the pre-incarnate Christ on His throne (Isa. 6; John 12:37–41), enabled Ezekiel to see the glory of the Lord (Ezek. 1), and preserved three Hebrews in a furnace of fire (Dan. 3:26–27). He reduced Nebuchadnezzar to the state of an ox (Dan. 4:32–33), shielded Daniel in a den of lions (Dan. 6), humbled Jonah in the belly of a fish (Jonah 2), and sheltered his head with a gourd (Jonah 4:6).

He silenced the voice of Zacharias for a season (Luke 1:20–22), placed the seed of conception in the womb of Mary (Matt. 1:18–25), turned water into wine (John 2:1–11), healed the sick and cast out devils (Matt. 8:16), and calmed angry seas (Matt. 8:23–26). He gave sight to the blind (Matt. 9:27–30), speech to the mute (Matt. 9:32–33), and hearing to the deaf (Mark 7:32–35). He multiplied bread and fish to feed thousands (Matt. 14:15–21), walked on water (Matt. 14:25), restored a severed ear (Luke 22:51), revived a withered hand (Matt. 12:10–13), and raised the dead (Luke 7:11–15). He veiled the sun for three hours (Matt. 27:45) and raised Christ from the dead (Acts 2:24–32).

He immersed the apostles in miraculous power (Acts 2), healed a lame man (Acts 3:1–8), conveyed Ananias and Sapphira



from time to eternity (Acts 5:1–10), and released the apostles from prison (Acts 5:19). He appeared to Saul on the road to Damascus and restored his sight (Acts 9:1–18) and freed Dorcas from the grip of death (Acts 9:36–41). He granted the supernatural gift of speech to Cornelius and his household (Acts 10), slew Herod with worms (Acts 12:23), and struck Elymas with temporary blindness (Acts 13:6–11). He battered the sons of Sceva with an evil spirit (Acts 19:13–16), revived Eutychus from the sleep of death (Acts 20:7–12), and delivered Paul from the serpent’s venom (Acts 28:3–6). He bestowed spiritual gifts upon the Christians in Corinth (1 Cor. 12), allowed Paul to enter the Paradise of God (2 Cor. 12:1–4), and opened the door of heaven to John (Rev. 4).

Is a man thinking right about God when he embraces in full faith “In the beginning God” (Gen. 1:1) with all of its implications and mysteries and then proceeds to doubt, question, or argue with a statement or miracle in God’s revelation to man?

“In the beginning God” (Gen. 1:1). These words move like mental thunder across the mind. They trigger an explosive device in the mind. These four words shatter the petty and trivial things of life. They provoke countless questions for which there are no revealed answers, for the “secret things belong to God” (Deut. 29:29). They join the foundations of man’s mental framework. They erect a barrier to frivolous thought. One may come there with flippant thinking, but he cannot remain there with it. God was at Time’s inception in the singular truth of this introduction to God’s revelation to man. But the suggestive truths emanating from this single truth would make the initial statement seem diminutive. Zophar was wrong about the reason for Job’s suffering, but he was right when he said,

Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea (Job 11:7–9).

It would be easier to squeeze the universe into a thimble than to compress God into the mind of man. Proper thinking about “In the beginning God” leads to thinking right about God from Genesis 1:1 to Revelation 22:21.



2

THE NATURE OF GOD

With immense trepidation, does this literary effort now engage the nature of God. Men, wise in foolishness (Rom. 1:22) and drunk on pride, claiming to be spiritual leaders, spew forth mindless theories, viewed as facts, about the nature of God that are antagonistic to God's own revelation of Himself. Pompous speech about unstudied matters is the pinnacle of foolishness. It is man's ineptness in living verbal color. "Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm" (1 Tim. 1:7). The law of God is a manifestation of the nature of God. Men love to pontificate about both while possessing knowledge of neither.

Some have acquired prestigious academic degrees and view themselves as being highly proficient in matters relating to the natural world, yet never claim to have unraveled all of its mysteries. They often reject the existence of God or array themselves in opposition to various attributes of the nature of God. They cannot offer full disclosure of all the secrets of some of the simplest forms of beast, fowl, fish, or vegetation, yet they do not hesitate to speak, in a most abhorrent manner, as though they were experts regarding things that relate to God and His nature. They intrude into an area they have not deliberated upon and address subjects of which they have no knowledge. A lifetime of biblical study cannot begin to exhaust the depth of truth contained in even a single attribute of God.

God's Eternalness

God "inhabiteth eternity" (Isa. 57:15). The word *eternity* rolls off the lips with ease, but the mind cannot grasp it. It stands at