

# CHAPTER TWO

**1** IN THE BEGINNING GOD

**2** ANGELS, HOSTS AND STARS

# 1 IN THE BEGINNING GOD...

God is great! The Scripture declares it over and over again. God's greatness is embedded in the very first sentence of the Bible—in four very profound words. It says:

*In the beginning God...*

*Genesis 1:1*

There are no opening arguments for the existence of God—it is assumed he exists. God is just *there*.

## ETERNAL

God has been there all along. God existed before plants, animals and people, before the earth and the universe. He had no beginning and he will have no end. God has always been and will always be. The Scripture says that God has existed from everlasting past to everlasting future. God is eternal. Moses, one of God's prophets, penned these words:

*Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth... from everlasting to everlasting you are God.*

*Psalms 90:2*

The concept of an eternal God is difficult for us to grasp. It's so troublesome to our intellect that often we file it in our cranium under the label *impossible*. But there are illustrations to help our comprehension. For example, we can compare eternity with the cosmos.

Most of us can fathom our solar system—the sun surrounded by orbiting planets. We know it's vast, but space probes have made the farthest distances seem reachable. But go a step further and begin to measure the universe. If we were to climb into a spaceship and travel at the speed of light, we would circle the earth *seven times in one second!* How did you enjoy your tour? A little brisk, perhaps? Heading out into space at the same speed, we would pass the moon in two seconds, the planet Mars in four minutes, and Pluto in five hours. From there you are off into our galaxy—the MILKY WAY.

At the speed of light you circle the earth seven times in one second ...



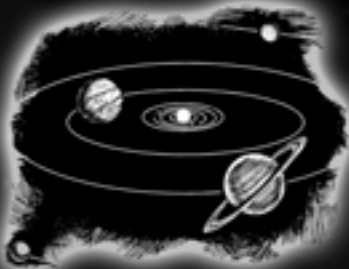
... pass the Moon in two seconds ...

... and Pluto in five hours.

Mars in four minutes ...

At the speed of light, you will reach the closest star in 4.3 years, which means each second of those years you travel 186,000 miles or 300,000 kilometers—a total distance equivalent to 25,284,000,000 miles or 40,682,300,000,000 kilometers.

Our star, the sun, is near the edge of the Milky Way Galaxy. Our entire Solar System with its orbiting planets could fit in this box.



## The Milky Way Galaxy<sup>1</sup>

The band of stars you see in the night sky is part of a gigantic family of stars called the Milky Way Galaxy. Traveling at the speed of light, it would take 100,000 years to cross it from one side to the other. There are an estimated 100 billion galaxies in the Universe, many comprising billions of stars. Galaxies come in clusters and super-clusters. There are about twenty galaxies in our cluster, and thousands of galaxies in our super-cluster.

### Want a star named after you?<sup>2</sup>

Based on the present population of the earth, you could have 16 *galaxies* named after you. That means *billions* of stars could carry your name!

At the speed of light,  
you will reach the  
next closest  
galaxy in  
2,000,000  
years ...



... and the next closest  
cluster of galaxies in  
20,000,000 years.

At this point  
you have  
only begun  
to travel the  
Universe.

Yes, the thought of an eternal God is difficult to grasp, but so is the vastness of our universe. Both are mind-boggling, yet both are real. The Scripture speaks emphatically on this point. God's eternal existence is such an inherent part of his greatness that the Word of God refers to it as his name ...

... *the name of the LORD, the Eternal God.* *Genesis 21:33*

### **MANY NAMES**

God has many names or titles, each declaring something about his character—his greatness. We will look at three:

#### **1) I AM**

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

The closest one can get to an explanation of this statement is this: *I AM the One who is* or *I AM the self-existent one*. God exists by his own power. We need food, water, air, sleep, light—an endless supply of essential items to live—but not God. He requires nothing—nothing at all! He is *the self-existent one*, the *I AM*.

#### **2 ) LORD**

The title *I AM* is not commonly used in the Scripture because its meaning is embedded in the word *LORD*.

*No one is like you, O Lord; you are great, and your name is mighty in power.* *Jeremiah 10:6*

The name *LORD* not only highlights God's eternal self-existent state, but also focuses our attention on his position—a position that is higher than all others. He is *LORD* of lords.

#### **3 ) THE MOST HIGH**

This name ties in with the name *LORD* by emphasizing God's role as a sovereign ruler.

*Let them know that you, whose name is the LORD—that you alone are the Most High over all the earth.* *Psalms 83:18*

Just as ancient empires had absolute leaders or sovereigns who reigned over their domains, so God is King of the universe, the God Most High. Even the word *God* itself emphasizes his

position as supreme ruler. The word *God* means *strong one, mighty leader, supreme Deity*.

*The LORD is in his holy temple; the LORD is on his heavenly throne. He observes the sons of men; his eyes examine them.*

*Psalms 11:4*

God rules from Heaven. We don't know much about Heaven, but the little we do know is incredible. We will discuss this in more detail later on, but for now it is enough to know that this great God is the supreme Ruler.

### **ONLY ONE GOD**

The term *The Most High* means that God is unquestionably unique—another aspect of his greatness. There is no one else like him. He stands alone, the sovereign LORD of all.

*I am the LORD, and there is no other; apart from me there is no God.*

*Isaiah 45:5*

*Before me no god was formed, nor will there be one after me.*

*Isaiah 43:10*

There is no hierarchy of gods, with one big God ruling the roost as it were. No other gods exist *out there*, whether self-existent or created.

*This is what the LORD says... "I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God."*

*Isaiah 44:6*

The Scripture is emphatic—there is only one God.

*You believe that there is one God. Good!*

*James 2:19*

*There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the One who is able to save and to destroy...*

*James 4:12*

### **A SPIRIT**

Before we leave this subject, we need to understand one last thing. The Scripture tells us that God is invisible because...

*God is [a] spirit...*

*John 4:24*

Think of a funeral of a friend who has died. The body was there, but where was your friend? He was gone; your friend's spirit was no longer there. When we look at someone, we only see their house, the human body—but we don't actually see the real person, the spirit.

We will see that the Scripture indicates in many different ways that man's spirit starts at a point in time and then lives on forever. But God is different; he never had a beginning and he will never end. He is the only eternal spirit, living from everlasting past to everlasting future.

**God:** He is a **Spirit**.

He is **eternal**.

He is the **I Am**—the self-existent one.

He is the God **Most High**, the Sovereign Ruler of all.

He is the **only** God.

Individually and combined, these attributes declare that God is great. And that's the way it was—*In the beginning...*

## 2 ANGELS, HOSTS AND STARS

God's first creative act is scattered across the pages of the Bible. You can pull together enough information to answer rudimentary questions, but that is where it stops. It gives basic information on some events, but when it comes to further details, the pages fall silent. This is precisely the case with the subject of spirit beings.

### NAMES

The Scripture calls spirits by many different names, some singular, some plural. We often call them angels, but the Word of God uses many terms to define them: cherubim, seraphim, angels, arch-angel, morning stars—the list goes on. Collectively they are referred to as multitudes, hosts, or \*stars.

\*Not to be confused with stars in the night sky. Context reveals which meaning is in question.

*The host of heaven worships You.*

*Nehemiah 9:6 NKJV*

They may all have personal names but only a few are mentioned, such as Gabriel and Michael.

### INVISIBLE, INNUMERABLE

As with God, spirits are invisible having no bodies of flesh and blood like you and I. Even though we can't see them, they must be everywhere. The Scripture indicates that there are ...

... *thousands upon thousands of angels* ... *Hebrews 12:22*

The idiom used to number just those surrounding God's throne communicates an unfathomable sum.

*Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne ...*

*Revelation 5:11*

## SERVANTS

The angelic beings were created to serve God and do his pleasure. They are called *ministering spirits*.

*Praise the LORD, you his angels, you mighty ones who do his bidding, who obey his word. Praise the LORD, all his heavenly hosts, you his servants who do his will.*

*Psalms 103:20,21*

*Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve ... ?*

*Hebrews 1:14*

The word *angel* is derived from the Greek term, meaning *messenger* or *servant*. Because God created them, they belonged to him and were to do whatever God asked them to do.

## CREATOR-OWNER

The concept of the creator also being the owner has lost its strength in our industrialized, money-driven economy. I remember walking through a tribal village in Papua New Guinea. Every item I asked about—“*Whose paddle is this? Whose canoe is that?*”—elicited a response that designated an owner. Upon inquiring how they knew who the owner was, they looked at me incredulously. “*Well, the owner is the one who made it!*” The creator-owner connection was very strong. When I questioned them if it would be all right for me to break a paddle, they were just as emphatic that it would not be a good idea—unless I wanted to have trouble with the creator-owner. Taking it a step further, I asked if it was acceptable for the owner to break it. They gave a tribal shrug and a nod: “*It's okay for the owner to break it—he made it.*”

God created the angels and so it was not out of place for them to be considered his possessions. And since they belonged to him, they were to do his bidding—as his servants, as his messengers. This was not some ancient form of servitude.



There are no parallels here to forced bondage. The angels could have had no better Creator-Owner.

### **EXTRAORDINARY INTELLECT AND POWER**

To carry out his directives, God created the angels with great intellect and power. Some of these angelic beings had more capability than others. The angels were created perfect, without any evil. But they weren't robots either; they had their own will which gave them the ability to choose.<sup>3</sup>

### **SIMILAR BUT DIFFERENT**

Angels share some similarities with man, though man is not nearly as powerful or intelligent. The Scripture says that God made man ...

*... a little lower than the angels ...* *Psalms 8:5 NKJV*

Though similar, angels are distinct from man. They never die.<sup>4</sup> They neither marry nor reproduce.<sup>5</sup> Though normally unseen, on certain assignments they make themselves visible. When they talk to man, the language they use is understandable to the hearer.

### **THE ANOINTED CHERUB**

The most powerful, the most intelligent and the most beautiful spirit ever created was a cherub. His name is translated as *Lucifer*,<sup>6</sup> which means *shining one* or *morning star*.

*... O Lucifer, son of the morning!* *Isaiah 14:12 NKJV*

Lucifer was referred to as an anointed cherub. The meaning of the word *anointed* has its origins in the ancient rite of pouring oil on someone or something to set it apart to God for a special task. This act was considered sacred and not to be taken lightly.

*You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. You were on the holy mount of God... You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created...* *Ezekiel 28:14,15*

It seems that Lucifer's job kept him in the presence of God at all times. Perhaps, he somehow represented the rest of the angels and led them in their worship and praise of their

Creator-Owner. We will learn more about this anointed cherub later.

### **WORSHIP**

The word *worship* means *to declare a person's worth*. The Scripture says that all the angels worshiped God.

*You give life to everything, and the multitudes of heaven worship you.*

*Nehemiah 9:6*

That is only fitting since God is the Sovereign King and as such rightly deserves to have his worth declared. By way of contrast, if I am boasting about a friend's deeds, someone else could call into question whether my friend deserves as much praise as I'm giving. But the Scripture says that this great God is worthy of all praise.

*You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.*

*Revelation 4:11*

*... you are great and do marvelous deeds; you alone are God.*

*Psalms 86:10*

### **ALL THE ANGELS WATCH CREATION**

God's creative act had begun. Now, as all the angelic host watched and rejoiced, God embarked on his next great work of art.

His canvas: the universe.

His subject: the whole earth.

God's words to the prophet Job remind us of our Creator's incomparable greatness.

*"Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me, if you understand. Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know! Who stretched a measuring line across it? On what were its footings set, or who laid its cornerstone—while the morning stars [or spirit beings] sang together and all the angels shouted for joy?"*

*Job 38:4-7*