

Awesome God #1

By Bill Denton

INTRODUCTION

A. Illustration

It is the desire for God which is the most fundamental appetite of all, and it is an appetite we can never eliminate. We may seek to disown it, but it will not go away. If we deny that it is there, we shall in fact only divert it to some other object or range of objects. And that will mean that we invest some creature or creatures with the full burden of our need for God, a burden which no creature can carry.
— Simon Tugwell, *The Beatitudes*

B. This writer speaks to a central, fundamental human need that is expressed in a desire to know, understand, and relate to God

1. This is something that is often denied, as many will declare themselves to be atheists who do not believe in God
2. But when we watch the whole dynamic of human life played out, it becomes clear that even atheists create objects of faith, and even more so do those who believe there is a God, they just don't know who he is

C. We've read Romans 1 where Paul explains the consequences of rejecting God, and knowing and following his will

1. Without a purposeful acknowledgement of God, and an active seeking of his will, man is destined for an ever-increasing negative effect of sin
2. Man without God is truly a sad thing to behold

D. There is one statement that I want us to focus on that will provide a springboard for the sermons this month

1. Romans 1:18-22

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. 21 For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. 22 Professing to be wise, they became fools, NASU

2. Focus on Paul's statement that God made himself known through his creation
 - a. God's eternal power can be known, for it must be greater than creation
 - b. His divine nature is known because he must be different from creation

I. THOUGH LIMITED, GOD CAN BE KNOWN THROUGH CREATION

A. Psalms 19:1-6

1 The heavens are telling of the glory of God;
And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands.
2 Day to day pours forth speech,
And night to night reveals knowledge.
3 There is no speech, nor are there words;
Their voice is not heard.
4 Their line has gone out through all the earth,
And their utterances to the end of the world.
In them He has placed a tent for the sun,
5 Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber;
It rejoices as a strong man to run his course.
6 Its rising is from one end of the heavens,
And its circuit to the other end of them;
And there is nothing hidden from its heat. NASU

B. Jeremiah 5:21-24

21 'Now hear this, O foolish and senseless people,
Who have eyes but do not see;
Who have ears but do not hear.
22 'Do you not fear Me?' declares the Lord.
'Do you not tremble in My presence?
For I have placed the sand as a boundary for the sea,
An eternal decree, so it cannot cross over it.
Though the waves toss, yet they cannot prevail;
Though they roar, yet they cannot cross over it.
23 'But this people has a stubborn and rebellious heart;
They have turned aside and departed.
24 'They do not say in their heart,
'Let us now fear the Lord our God,
Who gives rain in its season,
Both the autumn rain and the spring rain,
Who keeps for us
The appointed weeks of the harvest.'" NASU

C. Isaiah 40:21-26

21 Do you not know? Have you not heard?
Has it not been declared to you from the beginning?
Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth?
22 It is He who sits above the circle of the earth,
And its inhabitants are like grasshoppers,
Who stretches out the heavens like a curtain
And spreads them out like a tent to dwell in.
23 He it is who reduces rulers to nothing,
Who makes the judges of the earth meaningless.

24 Scarcely have they been planted,
Scarcely have they been sown,
Scarcely has their stock taken root in the earth,
But He merely blows on them, and they wither,
And the storm carries them away like stubble.
25 " To whom then will you liken Me
That I would be his equal?" says the Holy One.
26 Lift up your eyes on high
And see who has created these stars,
The One who leads forth their host by number,
He calls them all by name;
Because of the greatness of His might and the strength of His power,
Not one of them is missing. NASU

D. Isaiah 45:5-7

5 "I am the Lord, and there is no other;
Besides Me there is no God.
I will gird you, though you have not known Me;
6 That men may know from the rising to the setting of the sun
That there is no one besides Me.
I am the Lord, and there is no other,
7 The One forming light and creating darkness,
Causing well-being and creating calamity;
I am the Lord who does all these. NASU

E. Acts 17:23-26

23 "For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, 'TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.' Therefore what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you. 24 " The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; 25 nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things; 26 and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, NASU

F. There are some things you can learn about God from the creation itself

1. You can learn that God transcends the creation
2. You can learn that God's power is greater than all the creation itself
3. You can know that divine sovereignty or rule governs the creation
4. You can learn that God is amazing!

II. WE NEED TO BE AMAZED

A. Illustration

With some 30 million people now involved world-wide [in online, virtual reality video games], there is mounting concern that some are squandering—even damaging—their real lives by obsessing over their "second" ones. That's always been a concern with videogames, but a field of study suggests that the boundary between virtual worlds and reality may be more porous than experts previously imagined.

Nearly 40 percent of men and 53 percent of women who play online games said their virtual friends were equal to or better than their real-life friends, according to a survey of 30,000 gamers conducted by Nick Yee, a recent PhD graduate from Stanford University. More than a quarter of gamers said the emotional highlight of the past week occurred in a computer world...

Edward Castronova, associate professor in the Department of Telecommunications at Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana, says, "There's a fuzziness that's emerging between the virtual world and the real world." *Alexander Alter, "Is This Man Cheating on His Wife?" The Wall Street Journal (8-10-07)*

B. Let me make a bold suggestion – human beings have always been tempted by amazement at the wrong things

1. People are now concerned that gamers are getting too wrapped up in their 'virtual world' experiences
2. These experts are suggesting that the concern is that people will lose the ability to relate properly to the 'real world'
3. The truth is that ever since man has walked the earth, we've been in constant danger of losing our ability to be relate to, and connect with, that which is "real"
4. What is "real"
 - a. something of substance or something illusionary
 - b. something permanent or something temporary
 - c. I can see why experts might want to warn that a 'virtual' world is not 'real' and therefore we should exercise care in how caught up we are so that we will not lose touch with reality
 - d. but we also need to see that in a very real way, only God, and things eternal and transcending this universe of ours is truly "real"
5. We need to fight hard with ourselves to keep alive our ability to be amazed at God's creative genius and power

CONCLUSION

A. We are constantly amazed at the wrong things

1. Computers and virtual world experiences create in imaginary existence that has a powerful appeal to a lot of people
2. The special effects experience of movies can entertain us, drawing us into a world of images and sound, of powerful emotions that leave us breathless
3. The airbrushed artwork of advertising can move us to buy into products and services built on the empty promises of illusion and imagination
4. Even more mundane things of everyday life can capture our attention, pull us into a self-created world, and leave us holding onto nothing

B. Ours is an age in which people must begin to see the God behind the creation

1. People need to know this God of divine nature and eternal power
2. You can stand in awe at the beauty and majesty of the creation, but surely the beauty and majesty of Creator is even greater
3. One will never understand or appreciate anything about the universe unless and until one understands the God who put that creation here

C. Here's something even more amazing

1. That same all-powerful, transcendent God who created all that exists, knows you by name and sent his son to die that you might be saved
2. There is nothing more amazing, than to think that the God of creation loves and cares for each of us who are but tiny specks of dust – infinitesimally small and insignificant, yet personally loved by God himself

D. Invitation