

Community Church of Issaquah

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Who Is God?

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I'm not sure we ever give too much thought to the fact that our lives are filled with questions, but I do not believe a single day ever goes by without our questioning something or someone. It could be asking the simplest such as, "What's for dinner?" to "Why is my knee so sore?" to "How did that happen to such a nice person?" to "Wonder what the pastor will preach about this week?" Trust me, there are many questions much, much deeper than any of those, but the point is that our lives are filled with questions – mine is, yours is, everyone's is.

Were you told in Sunday School not to ask hard questions that would embarrass your teacher? I was. So I waited until I got to seminary and then into positions on church staffs before some questions came to the forefront of conversations. No other question in my world has been more perplexing to me than this one, "Who is God and where did God come from?"

I do not come to you this morning with definitive answers, because who among us can fully comprehend the complexities of how everything began? Instead, I want us to journey together through scripture, philosophy, history, and the feelings of our own hearts, seeking not to unravel God but to sense God closer to our own lives as believers.

In the beginning—ah, those sacred words from Genesis 1:1: "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." Notice that the Bible does not say, "In the beginning, God was created." No, God simply *is*. The origins of God, in the Judeo-Christian tradition, are not a tale of birth or emergence but of eternal existence. God is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, as Revelation 22:13 proclaims. This concept of a God who has always been present is foundational to monotheistic faiths like ours. It tells us that God transcends time, space, and existence—realms that God Himself ordained.

Our curiosity is ever present, though. We ask, "If everything has a beginning, how did God begin? When Moses asks in Exodus 3:14 who God was, the response was "I Am Who I Am." It's not in the past tense or the future tense, but only in the present tense. It tells us that God affirms his existence without an origin. It's difficult to comprehend that anything doesn't have a beginning or an ending, but that is God. Other faith traditions base their beliefs on the same concept – no God was created but has always been. That is true for Hinduism's belief of Brahman and in Islam where Allah is simply said to be "The Eternal." Across faiths, we see a convergence: the divine source is unoriginated, defying human notions of origin.

The shift to monotheism or the belief in only one god, particularly with the Hebrews, marked a radical departure from the world before them. Yahweh is not just one god among many with a backstory; He is the sole, eternal God who reveals Himself consistently—from the burning bush to the incarnation in Christ. This progression invites us to

ponder: Are the "origins" of God truly about God's beginning, or about humanity's awareness of the divine? Did the God we know only appear when the Hebrews changed their minds about how many gods there might be? The Bible addresses that in Exodus 20 when it talks about idolatry or worshipping other gods except one.

The 'Big Bang theory', presents a universe expanding from a creation about 13.8 billion years ago. Some see this as evidence for a Creator, as physicist Stephen Hawking once quipped, "What place, then, for a creator?" Yet, Hawking's own work in *A Brief History of Time* grappled with a universe that might have no boundary in time, echoing eternal concepts. Does this verify the truth that there was no beginning to God? Does this negate God's origin? That's another good question.

In our Christian beliefs, we see a God who has overseen creating the world and ruling it. This aligns with Colossians 1:16-17: "For by Him all things were created... and in Him all things hold together." God's origins? He holds the origins of all. Does everyone believe that? No. Many today, influenced by atheism, argue that God is a human invention, originating in fear or social control. The origins of God elude us because we are creatures within creation, not outside it. As Isaiah 55:8-9 declares, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways."

Now, envision the incarnation: In Jesus Christ, the eternal God enters time. John 1:1-3: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was

God... Through him all things were made." Christ's birth in Bethlehem is not God's beginning or origin but His revelation. The manger marks not a beginning for divinity but a bridge to humanity. Through the cross and resurrection, we glimpse God's eternal love, conquering death.

As we contemplate this, let it transform us. If God has no origin, then His love is boundless, His mercy unending. We are invited into eternal life, not as originators but as participants. Psalm 90:2: "Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the whole world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God." God is not an impersonal force but a personal being who desires intimacy with us. In Revelation 3:20, Jesus says, "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me." This imagery of shared fellowship highlights God's longing for our hearts.

As we draw near to God, He draws near to us (James 4:8), revealing more of His character and our purpose. When we seek to know God, we avoid spiritual isolation. It reminds us that we are beloved children of God. It empowers us to face life's storms with resilience, knowing we are never alone. Through this bond, our spirits find rest, as in Matthew 11:28: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."

Key to our growth in our faith is understanding God's sovereignty—His ultimate control over all things. Spiritually, this brings peace amid chaos, as we trust in

Proverbs 3:5-6: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight." When we give God control, it teaches us to release control, allowing our spirits to flourish in this way of surrender. Another facet is God's justice and righteousness, which inspire us to pursue being in a right relationship with God and to seek holiness. Psalm 89:14 states, "Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; love and faithfulness go before you." Embracing this motivates spiritual activism, where faith translates into action against injustice.

There are certainly other aspects of God's identity that we know from Scripture. One is God's faithfulness—His unchanging reliability—anchors our spiritual journey. Lamentations 3:22-23 affirms, "Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness." This aspect sustains us through trials, renewing our hope daily.

Another part of the God we know is his mercy. Paired with justice, mercy softens our hearts, teaching forgiveness. Micah 6:8 encapsulates this: "He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." Mercy invites spiritual humility, recognizing our need for grace.

God's wisdom is another profound spiritual aspect, offering guidance in an uncertain world. James 1:5 promises, "If

any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you." Seeking divine wisdom elevates our decision-making, aligning it with eternal truths. Spiritually, this helps us to discern right from wrong, good from bad, helping us navigate moral complexities with clarity.

I could go on and on with more and more about what we know of God from the Bible, but there is something far more important. As I close this brief message about Who God Is, there is one very important question you should be asking yourself. And that is, "Who is God to you?" So let me ask you, Who is your God and what do you know about him?