



# HERE IS YOUR GOD

a study of God's attributes

SERMON TITLE: God as Creator

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SCRIPTURE: Revelation 4-5

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What we need most is to know God for who he truly is. How we answer the question, "Who is God?" will change our lives indelibly. The Psalmist sings, "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised. His greatness is unsearchable!" There's a practical tension to this. If his greatness is unsearchable, then knowing him could be exhausting because there's no end to it. However, if his unending greatness is life-giving, then the journey of knowing him will always be worth it. Also, we should resist thinking about God on our own terms because distorted understandings of God can lead us down a path to ruin. God made us in his image, and we should run from the thought of making him in our image. So, what is God really like, and how do we know it? The story of Scripture reveals the answer to these questions. He's bigger than our categories of him, yet he invites us to know him through Scripture. And this story leads us straight to Jesus. In him, Scripture declares to us, "*Here is your God.*"

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## SERMON SUMMARY

Understanding God as Creator is one of the purest invitations to intimacy with him. Knowing him as Creator gives us the framework of our purpose. And if we can behold God in all of his creative beauty and artistry, we won't be able to help but worship him and be caught up in his love and "receive it into ourselves and even become part of it," as C. S. Lewis says. Sadly, many of us just don't know how to do this.

So, we have to ask: How does trusting God as Creator change us? Yes, recognizing God's beauty does something to us. And yes, we're meant to feel the essence and power of God's own creativity. But we not only need to know *that* it works, but *how* it works. Thus the question: How does trusting God as Creator change us? The answer today is from Revelation 4-5 and is fourfold.

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## SERMON SCREENSHOTS & KEY POINTS

First, God creates out of nothing.

In Revelation 4:11, it says, "You created all things and by your will they existed." That is, God wasn't working with pre-existent matter and doing the best he could. Rather, the created world is the result of God's will, his desire, and his good pleasure. As the writer of Hebrews says, "By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God so that what is seen was not made out of what is visible." And this might seem like an entry level doctrine, but it means more than meets the eye.

In the days of Scripture, creation was seen as the by-product of the pagan gods who were at war with one another, and they created everything out of their own anger and divine bloodshed. In our day, full-blown Darwinian naturalism says that everything came from nothing, and that it all happened by accident. Both of these historical extremes run into massive logical, philosophical, and even moral problems. For example, where did all the pagan gods from, and why are they so ticked off? And living with that as your creation story is frustrating and depressing. Additionally, everything can't come from nothing by chance. That's a rational and scientific impossibility. And living with an accident as the foundation of how we got here can never offer us hope or joy or purpose. It's as if the fabric of existence demands a creative being who brought life about purely their own will. Thus, Revelation 4:11.

This is why the pinnacle of the Bible's story is the cross and resurrection of Jesus, because it shows God bringing life out of Death. And this is what the New Testament calls New Creation. And that's why, when Paul talks about our salvation in 2 Corinthians 4, he says it's like God saying into our souls, "Let there be light" just like he did on page one of the Bible. We have to see that this is why we need new mercies every morning. Because we need to be empty vessels that we trust

God to fill with his own word and his own life. We can't make life happen on our own like he can, so we are utterly dependent on him to make life happen in us and through us.

Second, God as Creator means that he is creative in what he makes.

There is artistry to God's creation. It's not just that he made it all by his own will. It's also that what he made possesses a kind of beauty that should draw us in. The glory of God in creation is meant to woo us and captivate us to the point of worship. We can see glimpses of this in Revelation 4 with the ordered praise around the throne – with all creation delighting in “God's glory, honor, and power” (4:11). But this scene is actually the capstone of a longer subplot in the whole Bible.

Throughout the whole Bible, creation creatively sings praise to God. “Let the heavens be glad, let the sea roar, let the fields rejoice, and all the trees sing for joy!” Or, “Praise him sun and moon, praise him all you shining stars, praise him all you heavenly hosts!” Or, “The floods have lifted up their voice! The rivers clap their hands, and the mountains sing together for joy!” And this all climaxes in the scene we have in Revelation. But we also know this deep in our gut, that creation's beauty does something to us. There's something about the beauty of creation that we know is right. CS Lewis writes, “Music and poetry, the face of a girl, the song of a bird, or the sight of a horizon are always blowing evil's whole structure away.” Thus, delighting in and participating in the life of the Master Artist is part of why we were made and how we are changed.

Third, God as Creator means that there is design and purpose in what he makes.

Not only is there beauty, but there is likewise intentionality in his creation. It should also be noted that there is order and design in the throne room scene here in Revelation 4. It's perfectly symmetrical with the throne at the center and the twenty-four thrones encircled around the singular throne, and the four living creatures seem to be in purposeful movement around the throne. And this should be a reminder of God's original creation design in Genesis.

Genesis 1 is a poetic introduction to Genesis and the entire Bible. It teaches that there is design and intentionality in all that God has made. Genesis 1 is the opposite of how other people think about the world around us. It's not like the standard ancient account that describes creation as the result of warring deities. And it's not like the modern account of the natural world that asserts that it's all an unexplainable accident. Now consider, the purpose of the standard ancient creation account is that humanity exists as slaves to the gods; we are a by-product of their anger. And opposite of that, today many maintain that if life is an unexplainable accident, then there's actually no meaning. They maintain that purpose is just a projection of chemical reactions in the brain to keep us alive. And if we're all here by chance, then there's no point to it all. But this is not the view of Holy Scripture.

The Bible clearly teaches that you not a mistake. You are not a slave to a distant, angry god. You're not an accident. You are not a quantum hiccup. At the very heart of your existence is divine design, purpose, and intentionality. This means that you are deeply loved and valued. This means that you have innate dignity and worth. You are made in the image of the Creator God. You are breathing and alive today because he has hard-wired you for life with him. So, not only do purpose and meaning actually exist, but also we don't have to come up with it. This is freedom! We don't have to work our way to some subjective sense of existential meaning. Our highest goal, our supreme purpose is found in relationship with God. It's found in trusting him, loving him, and knowing him – not some projection of him who looks just like us, but knowing who he truly is. So much in the world today will fill your brain and heart with the lie that purpose is up to you, and that's a burden that we're not meant to carry. Rather, we exist to enjoy relationship with God and his world. And every other option will end in despair. So, yes, he creates out of nothing and he is creative in what he makes. But beyond this there is intentionality in what he makes.

Fourth, only God can redeem his broken creation.

God alone has the right and the power to redeem what he has created. We have tried in vain to fulfill God's purposes on our own. We have become blind to the fact that the same God who created us with desire is himself the fulfillment of

those desires. And we see this play out in Revelation 5. In Revelation 4, God is praised for his creation-activity. In Revelation 5, he is praised for his redemption-activity, which is just “New Creation.” Here, Jesus is the Lamb who is worthy to open the scroll and bring restoration to God’s good world that we have ruined. Jesus is God himself, entering his creation to redeem it. And proof that this is about the story God the Creator and his creation is Revelation 5:13, “And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, ‘To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!’” The point is plain: We can’t save ourselves. We’ve all acted inconsistent with our God-given desires. That’s why John is crying in 5:4. But...

God is out to redeem what he has created. He knows full-well about all of the hurt and hate and pain and sin and anger and injustice and greed and lust in the world. And so, he entered his own crumbling creation, in the person of Jesus, to bring healing and love and peace and wholeness and justice and grace and salvation and forgiveness to the world. And now, the way that we get to be a part of God’s New Creation story is by turning from our sin and trusting Jesus as God’s agent of present and eternal change. Our highest desire should be to live in pursuit of our divine design, but we have all fallen short. Yet, in Jesus alone, can the goal of creation be fulfilled in our own lives – by following him, depending on him, and extending his love to others. And when we do, we realize that this is the meaning and purpose that we’re all aching for, and it’s only found in Jesus, our divine Redeemer.

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### *COMMUNITY GROUP QUESTIONS*

- What was your favorite part of this passage/message?
- Why should thinking about God as Creator be humbling to us?
- In what way does our purpose become clearer when we think about God as Creator?
- What causes you to not appreciate God’s creative beauty in the world?
- When have you most felt drawn to worship because of God’s creative beauty and power?
- Who is someone you know who consistently delights in God as Creator?
- How should this passage/message change how you think about your own life?