

"Who Made God?"

Exodus 3:13-17
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Colossians 1:15-20
St. James UCC

Preached by Rev. Dr. Robert Matlack

Once in a while as our minds start to wander and struggle with unanswerable questions, or as our children prod us with their probing minds, we come across the question, "Who made God?"

If we ask who made the heavens and the earth, or the flowers and the trees, or the birds and the bees, the answer is obvious. God made them. But who made God? I understand that God made the world in which we live and all that is in it, but where did God come from? How did God come into being?

I suspect that once in a while it's healthy for us to stretch our minds with questions such as these. We certainly don't want to get so consumed with this kind of question so that we overlook the very real and urgent questions about how we live today, but I think that it may be good for us to push our minds to the limits once in a while, to really stretch our horizons, and to ask the unanswerable, at least unanswerable in one sense...

The question, "who made God" is unanswerable in the sense that none of us were there, nothing on earth was there, nothing in the universe was there, so we will never find a record or a solid piece of historical data that will answer the question in a way that is provable and definite. Yet at the same time, there is a very real answer to this question, and today I would like to explore that answer with you.

You see, the answer to the question, "who made God" is very simple and straight forward. No one and no thing made God. When you create or make something or someone, you are greater than your creation, at least in the sense that you have the power to do something it couldn't do - to create it. If I were to take some wood and build a table or maybe even the altar standing over here (if I were ever good enough in building things from wood to make something like that) I would not feel threatened by my creation. I would never doubt, I would always know that I was greater than that table or that altar that I had made. I would be proud of it, pleased with it, but never threatened by it. In fact, when we make something - our level of ability is reflected in our creation. The better job that we do, the more it speaks of our talent and ability.

As parents we have a hand in creating and shaping our children. It's a wonderful, miraculous process. Yet we know, that while we played an important part, we are not the ones who create life, and the most amazing miracle of all is that God is able to create life in all of it's intricacy and complexity. What a wondrous thing that is! When I look at what God can do in comparison to what I can do, I never doubt that God is much greater than I.

Part of the reason that I can so confidently answer that No One and No Thing made God, is that if someone made God, then that someone would be greater than God, and by definition that someone would be God. Only God has the power to create in that way. Only God is great enough, powerful enough, able enough to create God.

Oh sometimes we try. We pretend that there is no God or that we're greater than God, or we try to make God into whatever we want. I guess somehow feeling that since we cannot see God we have the right or the ability to make God in an image that suits us.

Erma Bombeck once told a wonderful story about a little boy who was sitting in front of her in church. He was just as quiet as could be and certainly wasn't bothering anyone, but every once in a while he would turn around and smile happily at everyone behind him. He did this several times to the pleasure of everyone who could see him. Suddenly his mother jerked him around and told him in a loud whisper to stop grinning - he was in church. Then when the tears came to the little fellow's eyes, his mother said, "That's better".

Sometimes we abuse the freedom that God has given us. Instead of using it to glorify God. Instead of using the freedom to learn and grow in ways that make us more faithful, we start to think that since God isn't dictating our every action, we have the ability, even the right to define God however we want, to ignore God, or to make God into a cruel, uncaring judge as this woman tried to do. Sometimes we forget that with our freedom comes the opportunity to listen, to hear, to experience, and in so doing to grow in our knowledge of God and God's love for us.

Our text from Colossians takes us back to the beginnings of time, even before time as it talks about Christ as the "visible likeness of the invisible God...the first-born Son" and goes on to talk about how God created everything through Christ. "God created the whole universe through him and for him. Christ existed before all things".

In the book of Exodus when Moses is talking with God and wondering how to convince the stubborn Israelite people to follow God out of Egypt. They have the freedom not to follow, so what is it that will convince them? Moses is wondering how to adequately describe God to the Israelite people in a way that will convince them to follow. When Moses asks God, "When I go to the Israelites and say to them, The God of your ancestors sent me to you, they will ask me, What is his name? So what can I tell them?" God's answer is simple and direct. "God said, I am who I am. You must tell them: The one who is called I AM has sent me to you."

Think about that for a moment with all of it's implications. I AM deals with the present. God calls him or her/self I AM because God exists in the present, but even more fundamentally it implies that God has always existed in the present, that there was never a time that God wasn't there. At the start of creation, God was able to say, "I AM". A million or billion or trillion years from now, God will be saying "I AM".

That's a tough concept for us to follow. We're used to the limitations of time. We have but a short span of life. Even if we live to be 90 or 100, it's still a short, limited span. We see our bodies age as time goes by. While sometimes we fight it, we know that we have to deal with the

limitations of time, for that limitation is part of who we are. But God isn't limited in that way. Once again, God is far different, far greater than you or I. God is, God always was, God always will be. There is no place and no time where God cannot say, "I AM".

For many centuries scientists have struggled to understand the beginnings the universe, the process of creation that has led to our world today. There are theories like "the Big Bang Theory" that somehow the universe began with this giant explosion, or more recently Stephen Hawking, a highly respected mathematician, has come up with a proposal called "A Theory of Everything". He has this to say about his theory, "My proposal is the statement that the universe is a closed system. We don't need to suppose there's something outside the universe which is not subject to its law. It is the claim that the laws of science are sufficient to explain the universe."

Now at first glance, the Theory of Everything causes people to stop and question; "If laws of science can explain everything, then where does God fit in?" But even Dr. Hawking has to go on to admit, "Even if we had a Theory of Everything, we would still be left with one final question. What is it that breathes fire into the equations and makes a universe for them to describe?" Even great scientists cannot explain the beginnings of the universe without coming to that point where they need to acknowledge a place for God's creative power.

God is able to say to Moses "I AM", because God was there not only to create the universe and to put fire into equations but also to put that fire into human hearts and souls, for God reminds us "I AM". There is no where we can go where God cannot say to us "I AM". We are God's creation. God is our creator. So let us live in harmony with the one who has given us life and love and blessed us in countless ways. In the midst of our questions and disappointments and fears, as well as in the midst of our successes and joys, God says to us, "I AM".

Amen.