

**Series:** Stories from the Past  
**Title:** "How It All Began"  
**Text:** Selected passages from Genesis 1 & 2  
**Key Word:** Details  
**Proposition:** Everyone shall welcome and embrace God with a heart of worship by knowing some details of His character.

One day Rachel-Ruth attended a summer camp along Cape Cod. After the campers got settled in, the counselor gathered all the girls together and introduced each student to the other. When she came to Rachel-Ruth she said, "This is Rachel-Ruth Graham from North Carolina." Do you know who her grandfather is?" Most of the girls said, "No, who is Rachel-Ruth's grandfather?" The counselor paused and then said, "He is the famous Billy Graham." Then one girl said, "You mean, Billy Graham, the wrestler?" Then another said, "No, silly, Its Billy Graham the singer."

These girls knew that Billy Graham was a famous, well-known man, but no one really knew who he was. I believe that many folks today possess the same understanding of God. They know He's famous and important. He is somewhere out there. He is the man upstairs. They know that He is powerful. But they really don't know Him.

All kinds of people claim they know God. Rev. Jesse Jackson and former Senator Jesse Helms claim to know God. Bill Clinton and George W. Bush say they know God. Osama bin Laden and Prime Minister of Israel claim to know God. All these people say they know God! Some say they know Him as Buddha others as Allah, some say they know Him through such prophets as Gandhi or Confucius.

Others know Him as the Force or the inner self. Some of us call God, Messiah, and call Him Jesus.

But can all these people, who live out such extremely different lives and beliefs really know Him as He truly is? Or do some of them simply know about Him?

Friends, I don't know about you, but I don't want to know God by what other people call Him. I want to know God by what He calls Himself. I want to know Him by what He thinks, what he does, what makes His heart dance and weep. I want to know His plans and purposes. I want to know His heart and mind. I want to know Him as He truly is. I want to know Him as Adam knew Him. I want to walk with Him and talk with Him. I want to know Him as Enoch knew Him. I want to know His glorious presence. I want to know Him as Noah knew Him, being willing to risk my reputation and everything I have and am to be obedient to Him. I want to care more about what God thinks of my life rather than my reputation. I want to know God as Abraham knew Him, trusting Him in every situation. What about you my friends? How do you want to know God?

In the weeks to come we will be looking at some stories of the past. I trust we will discover what God says about Himself, our relationship with Him and our relationship with others. Hopefully, by the end of this series, we will know more of His glorious presence, more of His unshakeable power, more of His abounding mercy, and unlimited love. Who is this God who made it all begin?

The opening statement of Genesis makes it clear that God is the Creator revealing some details of His character. John, a follower of Jesus wrote, *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”* John 1:1  
The writer of Genesis starts with, *“In the beginning God...”* Everything begins with God who is not bound by time and space and who is both greater than and separate from creation.

**Yes, God is not bound by time and space so we can be free from worry.**  
God created time, sixty seconds in a minute, sixty minutes in an hour, 24 hours in a day, 7 days in a week, and 52 weeks in a year and however many years in human history.

But God chooses not to live within the boundaries of time. Peter, a follower of Christ, wrote, *“with the Lord a day is like a thousand years and a thousand years is like a day.”* I wonder if the billions of years attributed to the age of the universe could be measured by God’s time. God’s time is not our time. His timing is based on eternity.

When Pontius Pilate and King Herod ruled in Jerusalem, Jesus Christ hung on a Roman cross for six hours of earthly time. But since Jesus Christ is God in human flesh, could it not be that his six hours of suffering was according to God’s time, eternal suffering for the sins of the whole world, for all of human history? Jesus, the Lamb of God, suffered an eternity of God’s judgment for every sin including our sin. O what love, O what mercy, was shown to all!!

What a blessed assurance! His mercy covers all the mistakes of our past, all our present hardness of heart, and all our future negligence. He is not only with us now, in this very moment, but He is also simultaneously in our past and as well as in our future. He is preparing the way for us and working to respond to our prayers.

What worries you about your past? What regrets do you have? God sees your past through the eyes of forgiveness. What are you worried about in your future? Some financial burden? A pending surgery or illness? Your children or grandchildren? Your career? Our eternal God who is not bound by time wants to release you from your worries. Jesus said, *“Come unto me and I will give you rest.”* He said, *“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me.”*

We all know how limited we are. We can not be at several places at one time. We can't be watching the Bengals beat the Browns while shopping with our spouse or a friend.

God though is not bound by space. God can be everywhere at once. He is present with us now as we worship him in Spirit and truth while also with those who are worshipping Him in California. He is with Christian orphans worshipping in Tanzania and with our brothers and sisters in Mexico. He is with the underground church in China as well as with the single mom trying to put bread on the table with a minimum wage job. No one is beyond the reach of His love. No one can escape the fury of His mercy. Not even those who are separate from you. He is with your child who attends a distant college or with your grandchild fighting a war in Iraq or

Afghanistan. He is with the spouse on a business trip and with a loved one fighting cancer.

No place is beyond God's reach. Not the prodigal's far away land, not "pleasure" island, not Lazarus' tomb, not the drug house or the jail house, not liar's den, not a tax collector's house, not a Mexican trash dump where children look for food or a betrayer's bedroom or a teen's computer. His presence reaches all places at all times.

There was though one time when God chose to be limited by time and space. At the time of his own choosing, God sent His Son, His only Son, to leave the infinite to dwell among the finite. Paul says, "*He made himself nothing...being made in human likeness. He humbled himself and became obedient to death, even death on a cross.*" The God of love chose to be bound in a mother's womb, in swaddling clothes, by a man's body knowing hunger, weariness, thirst, loneliness, and betrayal, by the leather cords of Roman soldiers, by nails that held him to a cross, and by a stone that sealed His tomb. But He was not bound for long. God overthrew death's grip. Love opened a tomb so that others would be free, free from all that binds: apathy, emptiness, guilt, shame, sorrow, worry, bitterness, brokenness, fearfulness, helplessness, hopelessness, loneliness, & self-righteousness. What keeps you bound? Where can He set you free? Like Lazarus of old, He calls you by name to come out of your tomb and live the life He has created you to live. For the One who began all things offers you a new beginning.

**God is both greater than and separate from creation so we're compelled to worship.** Just like the potter is greater than her pottery, the author greater than his book, the artist greater than her canvas, and the programmer greater than his computer, so God is greater than everything He has created.

He is greater than any circumstance or crisis, any organization or business, any individual or team, any problem or pressure, any habit or hang-up, sickness or death,. God is greater. There is nothing that is beyond the scope of his power.

New Age thinkers tell us that god is our inner self. They say that for us to find true happiness and peace we must wake up our inner god through some altered state of consciousness.

Others say I see God in a sunset or sunrise or at the golf course or a quiet lake or in some human act of kindness or compassion. Some say god is mother earth or "A higher Power."

My friends, the living, creating, God who has defined and revealed Himself is not a sunset or any other beautiful scene of nature. He is not the act of human compassion or kindness, any more than clay pottery is the potter. Just like we see a reflection of the artist in a painting, so we see only a reflection of the Creator in all that He has made. God is separate for all His creation.

So, He can mend the broken, find the lost, fix what doesn't work, heal any hurt, and raise the dead. There is no failure, no mistake, no sin, and no evil, which can dilute or diminish His love or weaken our God. We can not help but worship our

God who is greater than all life's challenging circumstances and whose love can never be polluted by the stench of sin. Let's continue to adore the Lord who begins all things at all times.

\*Resources: Holy Scriptures; The Glorious Dawn of God's Story, Ann Graham Lotz,