**Series:** This Is God **| Title:** The Nature Of God

# **Scripture:** Various | **Date:** September 7, 2022

# **What I Want People To Know**

The nature of God, who He is, is unlike any other person or being. God is uncreated, existing before time, and encapsulates all knowledge and power. **There is no person, being, or thing that is greater than God!**

**In order to understand just how great this God is, we must first define his nature.**

In order to understand the nature of God, we have to look at who God is before time. Not just primordial (existing from the beginning of time) , but pre-temporal (existing before time).

* This is perhaps one of the hardest aspects of God for us to grasp. Our finite minds cannot comprehend an infinite God.
  + Augustine, a 4th century theologian said it best, *“To imagine God as prior to creation is exceptionally difficult for minds that are themselves the products of creation*.”
* This thought really summarizes the nature of God well. “God minus the world is God. God minus the world is nothing.”

The understanding of God before time is essential to understanding his nature. This is what creates the difference between the ‘nature’ of God and the ‘character’ of God (which we will talk about more next week).

* The nature of God consists of attributes or qualities that preconditions any activity in or relationship with the world. **(who He is)**
* The character of God consists of attributes or qualities regarding any activity in or relationship with the world. **(who He is to us)**
* **Example** | God being our comforter is his character. He brings comfort because comfort does not exist outside of a relationship. Yet, God being all-knowing is his nature, because knowledge does not require activity or relationship with creation.

Another way to define the nature of God is by understanding his nature as incommunicable, or divine attributes. That is, **attributes that cannot be communicated or shared from God to anything or anyone else.**

So what are some of the incommunicable attributes, or the nature of God? There are necessary attributes and relational attributes we will look at.

### **Necessary Attributes |** These attributes are necessary for God to be God.

**God Is Uncreated |** This is what Revelation 22:13 means when it calls God the ‘Alpha and Omega’. He is the beginning and the end of all things.

* He was not created. He exists outside of creation. Which means he can also never be destroyed.
* Isaiah 43:10, *“Before me there was no god fashioned nor ever shall be after me. I am the Lord, I myself.”*

Because God is uncreated and underived, he is self-sufficient. Meaning, he is not dependent upon anything.

* God is not dependent on the universe and its ability to expand or collapse. He is not dependent upon earth continuing to exist. And he certainly is not dependent upon you or your worship.
* God simply is. He is Yahweh. The one who was and is and is to come. He simply exists.

Being uncreated is God’s nature because only God can be the one to experience it.

* This means that other gods cannot exist. And ‘if’ other gods do exist, then they were created by this God, and they cannot have existed before time. Because only God can be uncreated.

***Why Does God’s Nature Require Him To Be Uncreated?***

* If God is created, then that means that there is a force or being that is more powerful than He is. Therefore, he would cease to be God (Elohim | The mighty and powerful Creator).
* If the universe randomly and spontaneously created God, then the universe would become more powerful than God and could just as randomly and spontaneously take God away. But it can’t, because God is uncreated.

These next three necessary attributes of God reinforce this first attribute of God being uncreated.

**God Is Infinite |** Being infinite means, *‘that which there is no end, no limit, no finite boundary, and thus cannot be measured or timed by any finite standard.* -p. 42

Think back to math class, Algebra 2, when you no longer have to deal with just numbers and letters, but now you have to deal with infinite numbers as well. Numbers go on for infinity! They never end!

This is God. He transcends time and space. It means he is not bound by time or space, he exists outside of the concept.

* You and I know where we live in space (our physical location) as well as where we fit on the timeline of history (21st century).
* We know that we are finite beings, there is only so much physical space we can take up before we die.

Just as God does not have a beginning date, he doesn’t have an end date either. He isn’t limited to the physical location of heaven, or earth. He is above it all. He is infinite.

* You may be thinking, if being infinite is in God’s nature, and God’s nature can only be experienced by God, then that means nothing else can be infinite. But, you just said that numbers are infinite…well…numbers aren’t actually infinite.
* Because a number doesn’t truly exist until you think of it. Mathematics is a concept created by man in order to quantify our nature and existence. It can’t exist without thought. **But God can…**

Even if you never thought about God, God would still exist. Because He is infinite. He even transcends our thoughts. He is truly infinite!

**God Is Immeasurable |** You may be having a hard time comprehending the nature of God. We have talked about how he is uncreated and infinitely existing outside of space and time.

* And maybe you’re struggling to wrap your mind around all of these incredible divine attributes. How can I truly comprehend who God is? You can’t. Because God is immeasurable.

Everything that exists can be measured: our height, our weight, the size of the earth, even galaxies and universes. But God cannot be measured.

Psalm 145:3, *“Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised; and of His greatness there is no end.”*

After King Solomon built the Temple, the physical dwelling place of God, he said, *“But can God indeed dwell on earth? Heaven itself, the highest heaven, cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have built.”* -1 Kings 8:27

**God Is Eternal |** The idea of God being eternal wraps up the last two attributes we just discussed: infinite and immeasurable.

* That which is eternal is without beginning and without ending. -Clement of Alexandria
* Yet, for God, the whole of time is viewed as *now.*

This is what Peter means when he says, “with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.” -2 Peter 3:8

And because God is eternal, God does not age, because he is always in the *now.*

* He never gets tired, he never sleeps. Nothing ever happened, or will happen, because God is always in the *now.*

### This should bring us such great comfort! Knowing that God is always present with us! For us, He was present in the past, but for God the past is also in the now. So if God has been there for you before, you can trust that he will be with you in the future, and he is most certainly with you in the *now.*

### **Relational Attributes |** These attributes are still necessary for God to exist as God, but they are also specific attributes that reveal God’s nature to His creation. Therefore, they are relational as well.

* It is within God’s nature to present with his creation, know his creation, and supernaturally influence his creation. God cannot not be in relationship with His creation. It is impossible. It’s not in his nature.

**God Is Omnipresent |** Only God is able to ‘be’ everywhere without being limited to some specific location. Not only is God everywhere in relation to time and space, but he is everywhere in relation to us as well.

* God is ***naturally*** present in every aspect of natural order. You can’t be in God’s creation without seeing the one who created it. God is ***actively*** present in every event of history. He is ***attentively*** present to those who call upon his name. He is ***judicially*** present in moral awareness through our conscience. He is ***sacredly*** present through the Eucharist (communion). He is ***spiritually*** present through the Church, the special place, set apart by the faithful, where God chooses to meet with us. He is even ***physically*** present through the body of his son, Jesus Christ.

The Scriptures attest to God being ever-present.

* Acts 17:27-28 “He is not far from any one of us. *For in him we live and move and exist.”*
* Jeremiah 23:24 *“Can anyone hide from me in a secret place? Am I not everywhere in all the heavens and earth?” says the Lord.”*

**God Is Omniscient |** Only God knows all things from beginning to end. His knowledge is without limitations or conditions. This is why Jesus was able to say that *“Your father knows what your needs are before you ask him.”* -Matthew 6:8

* This is why nothing has ever “occurred” to God. Because he doesn’t have to think!

Not only does God know all things, but he knows all things simultaneously.

* If God is omnipresent, everywhere all the time, past, present, and future, yet living in the *now*, then every thought from every place is also in the *now*. He knows it all instantly. He doesn’t have to wait for worldly events to play out. He knows it all.
* Kids, you think Santa Claus knows everything? God knows even more than Santa Claus does! He knows it all!

**God Is Omnipotent |** God has the power to do all things that are consistent with his divine nature. This means that there are things God can’t do.

* We tend to think that being “all powerful” means God can do anything, but it simply isn’t true. He can do anything consistent with his divine nature. Well then how can he be omnipotent?
* One of the things God can’t do is actually what gives him the ability to be omnipotent. That is this, **God cannot limit himself**. If God could limit himself, then he could limit his power, but He can’t, so he is omnipotent.

He is also omnipotent because no thing can be more powerful than God. Therefore, he is all-powerful.

* God’s omnipotence gets challenged all the time. We say things like, “If God is real, then he will heal me.” “If God can do anything, then he will give me $1 million to pay off all my debt.” “If God has the power to do it, then he will do it.”
* And that simply isn’t true. Because God is all-powerful, he also has the power to choose. He has the power to choose how his power is displayed. He has the power to choose when, why, how and who. And because God is also omniscient, He is the only one with the right knowledge and power to discern when He does and does not display said power.

Thomas Aquinas, a 13th century theologian, says it best: *God’s power is not always bound to exercise every conceivable form of power in every situation. God also has the power to withhold influence temporarily, and to allow creaturely [earthly] powers to influence, and other wills to have their own effect.*

**Recap |** Divine attributes are attributes that cannot be shared by God to anyone else. They are necessary for God to be God: uncreated, infinite, immeasurable, and eternal. And while still necessary, God has three relational attributes that reveal his nature to us, his creation: omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent. This is the nature of God.