

FOUNDATIONS

LESSON 12: CREATION

The heavens are yours; the earth also is yours; the world and all that is in it, you have founded them. Psalm 89:11

Main Idea: God created the universe out of nothing, it was originally very good; and God created it to glorify Himself.

I. What do we mean by “creation”?

- A. *Defined:* “Creation is the free act of God whereby He...in the beginning brought forth the whole visible and invisible universe without the use of pre-existing materials, and thus gave it an existence distinct from His own and yet always dependent on Him.”⁵
- B. Two key aspects of God’s character are asserted with this view of creation.
 - 1. *God is imminent in his creation:*
 - 2. *God is transcendent over his creation*
- C. Only Christianity reconciles the tension between a God that is both near to and separate from His creation.

II. Why did God create the world?

- A. The Bible claims that the Genesis account is wholly accurate and from God, but it does not claim to explain everything about the creation process.
- B. Creation was a free act of God’s will for His glory, and yet we ultimately do not know why. (Is 44:6, Rev 1:8, Rom 11:36, Col 1:16, Heb 2:10, Prov 16:4)
- C. The mystery of God’s of the glory of God’s grace for His people (Eph 1:3-6)

III. What does the Bible teach about creation?

- A. Central truths to notice about the Bible’s creation account:
 - 1. Creation was the work of the triune God. We can expect creation to share some of the relational aspects of the trinity. (John 1:3, I Cor 8:6, Col 1:16, Gen 1:2, Is 40:13)
 - 2. The Bible teaches that time as we know it and the world started together.
 - 3. The Bible teaches all of God’s creation was good.
 - 4. The Bible teaches that man’s creation was unique and special from the rest of the created order.

⁵ Modified from definition by Berkhof, as cited by Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Great Doctrines of the Bible*, 127.

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- B. What happened at the initial moments of creation?
1. Two main views for how to interpret the first two verses of Genesis.
 - i. First view: The two verses describe two steps of one process. There was no “gap” between the speaking of the world into existence in Gen 1:1 and God’s work in forming his creation in Gen 1:2.
 - ii. Second view: There is a “gap” of unspecified time between when God spoke all things into existence and when he begins his particular creation works in 1:2.
 2. The parallel between the first three and the last three days of creation.
- C. What is the meaning of the word “day”? Considerable disagreement on this subject. It is interpreted to mean either a literal 24-hour period, or a vast expanse of time.

IV. What about evolution?

- A. How does the Bible’s account reconcile with “science”? The basic answer, for the Christian, is that God’s word and the real world will never contradict in actual fact.
1. These early chapters of Genesis claim to be history – there is no hint of poetry or allegory in this creation account.
 2. Science has constantly changed its conclusions as it the basic presuppositions that it uses change.
 3. Evolution is only a theory, and a theory that is accepted as much (if not more) for its philosophical assumptions than for the scientific evidence.
 4. Evolution can never provide an explanation for “ultimate” origins of life and the universe.
 5. On purely scientific grounds, evolution is not the irrefutable case that it is presented as.
- B. Accepting evolution wholesale creates some serious theological difficulties.
1. How do you explain the “specialness” of man as made in the image of God if man is simply an evolved animal?
 2. At what point in the evolutionary process does man inherit an eternal soul?
 3. If man’s nature is inherited through an evolutionary process evolved animal, how is he accountable for his actions and guilty of the wrath of God?
 4. Further, if man’s nature can change through evolution, isn’t there hope that man can “evolve” out of his sin problem?

V. Application questions for personal consideration

- A. Do you function as if God is both imminent and transcendent over the details of your life? Of those two attributes, which do you tend to forget and neglect?
- B. If God created all things for his glory, how ought that impact how we live today?
- C. Have you struggle to reconcile the claims of Scripture with our culture’s popular understanding of science? Does your struggle cause you to pursue God through His Word more fully?