

## Chapter 15: Creation

Why, how, and when did God create the universe?

Definition: *God created the entire universe out of nothing; it was originally very good; and he created it to glorify himself.*

### A) God created the universe out of nothing (262)

- 1) Biblical evidence for creation out of nothing
  - a) Before God began to create the universe, nothing else existed except God Himself (He created the universe *ex nihilo*). (Gen 1:1, Psa 33:6, Psa 33:9, Joh 1:3, Col 1:16, Rev 4:11, Heb 11:3)
  - b) Because God created the entire universe out of nothing there is no matter in the universe that is eternal. (Psa 90:2)
  - c) The fact that God created the universe out of nothing means that it has meaning and purpose.
- 2) The creation of the spiritual universe (264)
  - a) The creation of the entire universe includes the creation of an unseen, spiritual realm of existence. (Rev 10:6, Neh 9:6)
  - b) The New Testament explicitly affirms the creation of the spiritual realm. (Col 1:16)
- 3) The direct creation of Adam and Eve (265) (Gen 2:7, Gen 2:21-22)
  - a) These texts are so explicit that it would be very difficult for someone to hold to the complete truthfulness of Scripture and still hold that human beings are the result of a long evolutionary process. (Gen 2:7)
  - b) Even more impossible to reconcile with an evolutionary view is the fact that this narrative clearly portrays Eve as having no female parent: she was created directly from Adam's rib while Adam sleep → the very first female human being would have been descended from some nearly human creature.
  - c) We are created in God's image, the pinnacle of God's creation, more like God than any other creature, appointed to rule over the rest of creation.
  - d) The Scriptural perspective gives us the human significance that God intended us to have.
- 4) The creation of time (266)
  - a) God created time (the succession of moments one after another) and existed before it. (Job 36:26, Rev 1:8)
  - b) This reminds us of his lordship over it and our obligation to use it for his glory.
- 5) The work of the Son and of the Holy Spirit in creation. (266)
  - a) God the Father was the primary agent in initiating the act of creation.
  - b) The Son is the active agent carrying out the plans and directions of the Father. (Joh 1:3, Col 1:16)
  - c) The Holy Spirit is generally pictured as completing, filling, and giving life to God's creation. (  $\pi \uparrow \neg$  refers to "spirit," or "breath," or "wind," which even translated as such seems to be a figurative reference to the Holy Spirit). (Gen 1:2 Job 33:4)
  - d) The work of the Holy Spirit is brought into much greater prominence in connection with the inspiring of the authors of Scripture and the applying of Christ's redemptive work to the people of God.

### B) Creation is distinct from God yet always dependent upon God. (267)

- 1) God is *transcendent*, far "above" creation in the sense that he is greater than creation and independent of it. (Eph 4:6)
- 2) God *immanent*, very much involved in creation, for it is continually dependent upon him for its existence and functioning. (Job 12:10, Act 17:25, Heb 1:3)
- 3) This is distinct from materialism, which would say that the material universe is all there is.

- Christians today who focus almost the entire effort of their lives on earning more money and acquiring more possessions become “practical materialists” in their activity, since their lives would not be much different if they did not believe in God at all.
- 4) The Scriptural account of God’s relation to his creation is also different from pantheism, which says that the whole universe is God or is part of God.
    - a) God has no distinct personality.
    - b) God changes with the universe.
    - c) God is no longer holy because of evil in the universe.
    - d) The importance of individual human personalities is lost in the goal of blending with the universe.
  - 5) The Scriptural account also rules out *dualism*, that God and the universe have eternally existed side by side.
    - a) Dualism indicates an eternal conflict with God and the material universe, denies God’s ultimate Lordship over creation, denies that the universe was created inherently good, and encourages the view that material reality is somewhat evil in itself.
    - b) Example: *Star Wars* movies, where a universal “Force” has both good and evil sides.
  - 6) The Scriptural account rules out *deism*, that God created the universe but is not now directly involved in it (though some deists hold that God will ultimately judge the universe).
    - a) This view affirms God’s transcendence, though it denies biblical history.
    - b) Many “lukewarm” or nominal Christians are, in effect, practical atheists, since they live lives almost totally devoid of genuine prayer, worship, fear of God, or moment-by-moment trust in God to care for needs that arise.
- C) God created the universe to show His glory. (271)
- 1) God’s entire creation is intended to testify of His greatness. (Isa 43:7, Psa 19:1-2, Rev 4:11)
  - 2) Creation shows God’s great power and wisdom, far above anything that could be imagined by any creature. (Jer 10:12, Jer 10:16)
  - 3) God did not need to create the universe—it was a totally free act of God. (Rev 4:11)
  - 4) God created the universe to take delight in his creation, especially to the extent that it shows forth various aspects of His character.
  - 5) This explains human creativity (art, music, or literary skills, etc.). We enjoy imitating, in a creaturely way, His creative work.
- D) The universe God created was “very good.” (272)
- 1) If God created the universe to show his glory, we would expect that the universe would fulfill its purpose.
  - 2) At the end of each stage of creation, God saw that what he had done was “good” (Gen 1:4, Gen. 1:10, 12, 18, 21, 25.)
  - 3) At the end of the six days of creation, “God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good” (Gen. 1:31).
  - 4) Even though sin is now in the world, the material creation is still good in God’s sight and should be seen as “good” by us as well. (1Ti 4:4-5)
  - 5) This frees us from false asceticism that sees the use and enjoyment of the material creation as wrong. (1Ti 4:1-3)
  - 6) Though the material creation can be misused, we must not let the danger of abusing God’s creation keep us from positive, thankful, joyful use of it. (1Ti 6:9-10, 1Ti 6:17-18)