

Creation

- I. Creator and Creation:
 - A. The Christian faith maintains a distinction between God as Creator and *creation* which God brought into existence.
 - B. Who or what was in existence “in the beginning”? Read Genesis 1:1.
 - C. Please read Colossians 1:16. By Whom were all things created?
 - D. Again, this distinction is crucial to the saving faith. Psalm 90:2 reinforces that before creation (the world itself) came to be, God was.
 1. Thus the created order is temporal (of time). Einstein demonstrated that time and space is inextricable. The universe consists of a “fabric” that is time and space together and biblical theology asserts that these were *created*.
 2. What is truly interesting about this biblical teaching of the material realm having a beginning is that it appears to be supported by both scientific and philosophical considerations:
 - a. Via the Law of Cause and Effect.
 - b. Via the cosmological argument for the existence of God:
Premise 1: whatever begins to exist has a cause.
Premise 2: the universe began to exist.
Conclusion: the universe has a cause.
 - c. Via evidence of a stupendous singularity of unleashed energy detected in the background radiation permeating the universe.
 - d. Via the evidence of an expanding universe.
 - e. Via the seeming impossibility of the universe being an actual infinite regress. That is, if someone wants to say that the universe has no cause or no creation by God, then the answer to the question, “where did X in the universe come from?” is: “from something else in the universe.” But then you must ask the next question, “But from where did that ‘something else’ in

the universe come from?” To which the answer is again, “Well by yet something *else* in the universe?” OK, but where does this regress end? Some who deny God seem to want to say, “It never ends.” But is this a reasonable answer? Some philosophers say that if things are continually pushed back this way then such a system would eternally regress into the past and never arrive to a present time. This seems impossible in reality.

The biblical model, however, is that there was a real beginning to the universe. There is therefore a real past, a real history. And that history has led to the present. This model is made possible by the reality of the universe having been *created*.

3. God, on the other hand, did not begin because He was not created. God is not limited by nor confined to the space-time fabric which once began. God is beyond time and is therefore *eternal*. He is beyond space and is *infinite*. As being spirit (John 4:24), God is not confined to physicality. Furthermore, one of God’s titles “Alpha and Omega” (Revelation 1:8) does not mean that God had a beginning *in* time, but that He is “first” as in *before* all things (including the beginning of creation)!*

*note: sometimes people like to ask, “But who created God?” There is, however, such a thing as nonsensical questions when a question contains within it a “category mistake”. Asking, “Who created God?” is like asking, “How much does green weigh?” or “How fast – as in miles per hour – is your skin condition?” Putting God into a “who created God” question is a category mistake. God is by nature eternal and infinite. By nature He is incapable of beginning and incapable of an ending. Furthermore, this condition of God actually supplies a rationale escape from the infinite regress problem stated above: the universe began in time by an uncreated God who is not confined or restricted by time.

- E. Whew! So what? This distinction between Creator and creation has very important implications.
 1. It points to God’s power.
 2. It points to God’s care.
 3. And this points to the fact that God is by the implication of creation, willing and able to take care of us! Is He *really* able to? Well, if He is able to create the heavens and the earth, then yes, He is also able to provide for our every need!

F. But God's creation was not just for our physical needs. Before time began, God planned His grace in Christ for us! See 2nd Timothy 1:9.

G. OK, but WHY did God create?

1. Proverbs 16:4a states, "The Lord has made everything for its purpose...."
2. Romans 8:28 states, "All things work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to His purpose."
3. God created us so that we would experience good.
4. In Psalm 104:27-28 the word "give" occurs two times. What does God create and give to His creation? Answer: Good things!
5. Why would God do all this? 1st John 4:8 and 4:16 state that "God is love."
6. God created in order to give you good things out of His very nature which is love. God created out of His love.
7. Simple answer: to love.

II. Creation out of Nothing.

- A. In the Lutheran Church we believe, teach, and confess that God created the heavens and the earth out of nothing. We call this the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo*.
- B. Going back to Genesis 1:1 again, "In the beginning," means the absolute beginning, there was no primordial material in existence. What is more significant, however, is the word *bara*. This is the word at Genesis 1:1 which is, "In the beginning, God *created*..." This particular word is the verb depicting God bringing into existence that which never existed before – at the beginning of everything, including time.
- C. This teaches and assures us of God's miraculous power.
- D. This creation doctrine carries over as the foundation for other key teachings in the Christian faith:

1. The re-creation of life after death seen in the resurrection when our dead and buried bodies will be raised (John 5:28-29 & 1st Corinthians 15). Jesus died and was buried, and then on the third day He rose from the dead. God who creates out of nothing is not hampered by death. Death cannot interfere with God's *creatio ex nihilo* power.
2. God creates our living, saving faith in the same way. Where there is nothing but unbelief in the human heart, God CREATES saving faith through the power of His Word, so see the correlations:
 - a. In the physical creation event, God spoke and creation occurred. For example, in Genesis 1:3 God said, "Let there be light." And there was light.
 - b. In the event of raising Lazarus from the dead, Jesus spoke, "Lazarus, come out." (John 11:43), and Lazarus came out of the tomb.
 - c. In the spiritual creation event, God spoke to you by the power of His Word (just as He spoke light into existence and just as He spoke Lazarus back to life) and by the Word of Christ faith was created in you (Romans 10:17).
 - d. Now, consider how God refers to you, now that He has created faith in you:

2nd Corinthians 5:17: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come."

- e. By God's creation power He has given you physical life and by the same power, God has given you spiritual life.
- f. Creation helps us understand that our whole faith and life is dependent on God alone. God is responsible for every good and perfect gift; and it is only by God's sustaining power that we continue to enjoy existence and life. This greatly informs our theology. Ours is a *monergistic* (power from one) faith as opposed to a *synergistic* (power from two or more cooperating) faith. We believe, teach, and confess that God is the ONLY ONE responsible for our physical lives (we did not contribute to our own creation!). The same is true for our salvation in Christ which is completely by the grace and work of God alone! Even our sanctification (our Christian living) is completely conducted by the enabling and empowering work of God (even our good works are prepared in advance for us to do, Ephesians 2:10)! Therefore, we reject the false teaching of synergism which is the idea that we must cooperate with God for salvation. Perish the thought since even our faith is a gift from God!

III. Creation in Six Days:

- A. We have good reasons to treat the creation days in Genesis as actual days.
- B. First of all, we acknowledge that Scripture itself uses the word “day” in three different ways: 1) as a regular 24-hour day (over 90% of the time); 2) as “day-time,” the period of daylight within a regular day as opposed to “night” (Genesis 1:16 treats “day” this way); and 3) as a longer period of time, an era or epoch of time (Genesis 2:4).
- C. Having said this, why has the Christian Church traditionally treated the six days of creation as 24-hour days?
 1. Their sequential numbering and chronological presentation. Day one, the 2nd day, the 3rd day, etc. which is how we count and think of regular days.
 2. The words framing these days: “and there was evening and there was morning” which is yet another example of how regular days are treated.
 3. Exodus 20 compares the creation week with a regular week. Here the text is saying that the creation days are analogous to the regular week in the Mosaic Law.
 4. Finally and as mentioned above, since “day” is typically understood as a 24-hour day throughout Scripture, this seems to be what the people of Israel would have understood.
- D. As a way of possible compromise, sometimes Christian theologians will reduce the use of the days here to simply convey the meaning of orderliness. Now while good order is most certainly being indicated in the text, we must be careful not to downplay what appears to be the plain and simple meaning of the text.
- E. To be sure the reason 24-hour days are questioned in connection to, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth,” is on account of Darwinian Evolution and the further implications connected to popular cosmology. Without getting into a scientific or philosophical debate, let me simply state the reminder that the Bible is not the only thing subject to interpretation. This is true of science as well. That which is empirically observed must be interpreted. And we must be mindful that there are in fact two major worldviews (along with a mediating view that is often considered a compromise by the other two):
 1. The religious or biblical view of a miraculous creation which means that God essentially created a mature universe just as He once created a mature Adam. This view answers the challenge of star-light that reminds us that from the initial emitting of light from distant stars, that same light would take millions of years to travel to planet earth (therefore the universe must be

very old). But what if God created a universe filled with stars with their light already in transit, already filling the expanse of the universe at the beginning of time?

2. The Darwinian or materialist view of naturalism which means that there is no God and that the existence of the universe is a brute fact. This view sees the mechanism of Darwinian Evolution called “natural selection” to be all that is necessary to perpetuate life on earth. With enough time, all of the complexity that we see can be explained by evolution.

3. The mediating view is that God used evolution.

F. In the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod we readily admit that our view is not necessarily the most popular one, but we are also mindful of the fact that science itself continues to evolve. Just as Newtonian physics was once considered authoritative, but then forced to make way to the discoveries of sub-atomic physics, we know that for science to ever insist on its theories as absolute is to betray the very nature of science itself. We acknowledge that current observations based on the scientific method will sometimes bear results that do not neatly fit Scripture, but we also believe that Scripture is ultimately complementary to good science. Through the mid-20th century science considered the universe eternal, but science itself has since adjusted its position as the inflationary theory of the universe accommodates the idea of a beginning.

IV. Creation that is orderly:

A. Scripture is full of orderly distinctions among created creatures, including giving amazing testimony to great creatures called “Leviathan” in Job 41 and “Behemoth” in Job 40. God is a God of order and demonstrates that animals are distinct from humans and that humans are also distinct from angels, all part of God’s creation.

B. Part and parcel of this distinction is the distinction between man and woman that our Church believes demonstrates God’s design and will: marriage is between a man and a woman. See Genesis 1:27-28 and Genesis 2:18-22.

C. Read also 1st Corinthians 7:2-5. After the fall into sin, procreating children and companionship are not the only reasons for marriage. What does marriage curb or control (v. 2)? From whom does the marriage couple protect each other from (v. 5)?

D. Finally, read Ephesians 5:22-33. What other relationship do the man and woman symbolize and represent?

V. Concluding Notes:

- A. After the creation, the fall of man occurred as recorded in Genesis 3. Sin has now invaded God's good creation, but we need to be clear that sin was not created by God. So what is sin? St. Augustine described it as a privation. I will explain.
- B. So what has God done about this sin problem that has entered His good creation? Well, this is the reason we need to continue our discipleship course. For now know this: the saving Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is the basis for even this creation here and now looking forward to being released from its bondage to decay. Read Romans 8:20-21.