

## **Creation**

### **Introduction to the course**

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#### **B. What we will try to learn**

1. The nature of the God who creates
2. The details of creation
3. God’s continuing creation
4. Man and God’s redemption
5. How to defend the biblical position

#### **C. How to prepare for each session**

1. Read the chapter from the book.
2. Answer the questions on the question sheet.
3. Consider the issues that are being raised by the readings.

## Chapter 1 – The Creator

1. What does an inventor need to be successful?
  2. What are two reasons that inventions fail?
  3. What does “God is independent of His creation” mean?
  4. Why can’t we comprehend God?
  5. What does “omniscience” mean?

## **Chapter 2 – From Eternity**

1. What is eternity?
2. What are God's "personal actions"?
3. What is the "decree of creation"?

## **Chapter 3 – In the Beginning**

1. Why was it important that space and time did not exist before God's creation?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What are the similarities between God's creation and the Big Bang model?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. Why is the mention of the Spirit of God important?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. What is the significance of the creation of light?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. What is physical light?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. In what two ways is “*yom*” used?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. What does the mention of water tell us?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. What was the nature of the sky God created?

## **Chapter 4 – Populating the Creation (Part 1)**

1. What did the Earth look like after God divided the land from the sea?
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What is apparent age?
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. What are some of the things God created on the third day but did not mention?
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. What are the levels of heaven?
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. What are the two purposes of the heavenly bodies?
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. What are the stars?

## **Chapter 4 – Populating the Creation (Part 2)**

1. What is a “kind”?
2. What food did God provide for His creatures?

## **Chapter 5 – Continuing Revelation and Man**

1. From where did God reaffirm His 6-day creation?
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Why is God's claim to ownership of all the universe important?
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. What is the importance of Job 38?
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Which prophet makes the strongest link between God and creation?
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. What is the importance of Jesus' control-of-nature miracles?

## **Chapter 6 – Man – God’s Special Creature**

1. What is the image of God?
2. Compare the two creation accounts of man.
3. What was the special command that God gave Adam?
4. When did God create the angels?
5. What things did Adam and Eve lose in the fall?

## **Chapter 7 – Preservation – God’s Continuing Creation**

1. What is meant by God’s “hands”?
2. What is the “natural hand”?
3. Why did God have to change the DNA of some animals?
4. Give some examples of God’s supernatural power in the Old Testament.
5. What would God’s arm being “too short” mean?
6. What miracles did Jesus do to benefit people?

## Chapter 8 – God’s Re-creation of Man

1. Why did God ask “silly” questions?
  2. How did Adam lie by telling the truth?
  3. What was God’s punishment of Eve?
  4. Why was God’s punishment of Adam more detailed?
  5. Why did God choose a special people?
  6. What did priests, kings, and prophets have in common?
  7. How did God’s decree of redemption come into play?
  8. How did God’s decree of predestination come into play?

## **Chapter 9 – Judgment – The End of the Creation**

1. What is the “Day of the LORD?
2. Why will it be dreadful?
3. What are all the things that will happen when Jesus returns?

## **Chapter 10 – The Lutheran Confessions**

1. Why do we have confessions?
2. What is the recurring theme about God and the universe in the creeds?
3. What two parts of Luther's Small Catechism speak to creation?
4. Why was the Augsburg Confession written?
5. What was Matthias Flacius' error?

## **Chapter 11 – Science and Theology**

1. Why do we need a standard for truth?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What are the three factors in playing a card game?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. What is hermeneutics?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. What is the fundamental assumption of science?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. What is the fundamental assumption of Christianity?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. What is the difference between reason and logic?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. How does a hard science differ from a soft science?

## **Chapter 12 – Creation Apologetics**

1. What is a strawman in argumentation?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What is the principle behind radioactive dating?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. Why shouldn't we worry about the dates that scientists find for things on Earth?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. What is cosmology?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. What two things limit our study of the heavens?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. What is the “plate tectonic theory”?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. What do paleontologists do?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. What are the three legitimate strategies for creation apologetics?

## **Chapter 13 – Flawed Apologetics**

1. What is theistic evolution?
2. Why is theistic evolution incompatible with biblical Christianity?
3. What is intelligent design?
4. What is the teleological argument?
5. Why is intelligent design contrary to Christianity?
6. What is the problem with creation museums?
7. Why is attacking scientific models counterproductive?
8. Why does trying to create alternate models to combat evolution lead us into a trap?

# **Creation**

## **Chapter 1 – The Creator**

### **A. Who Could Create a Universe?**

1. Human inventions
  - a. We live our lives in environments that are almost entirely controlled by human inventions. The light by which we work, the temperature in our homes, and the means of communication are all the products of human thought and effort.
  - b. While their designs continue to be updated to make them better and better as time passes, frequently gaining options that we never imagined could exist only a few years previously, they still malfunction, wear out, or become obsolete.
  - c. When we see an oceangoing ship, a large building, a delicate watch, or any other sophisticated object, we know the object did not come into existence through natural processes, but by the vision of the inventor and the diligence of the manufacturer.
2. Human inventions often fail.
  - a. Human creators have their limitations. We are forced to recognize those limitations whenever something of human design does not meet expectations or fails. A failure could be catastrophic, as when a bridge collapses suddenly.
  - b. Even as new devices and structures become better, the perfection we need for the idyllic life is never reached. Often technical advances in one field cause challenges in some other area, as when irrigation lowers the water table or when wind turbines kill birds.
3. God, the ultimate creator
  - a. The writer of the book of Hebrews noted that “Every house is built by someone, and God is the one who built everything” (Hebrews 3:4). If God is, therefore, the ultimate creator of everything, then he must unquestionably be someone special.
  - b. We need to learn to know who this Creator is and what his attributes are so that we can better understand the nature of his creation. King Solomon wrote, “The LORD has made everything for his own purpose” (Proverbs 16:4).
4. Source of information
  - a. The best source of information about God is God himself, yet our access to him is limited. God said to Moses, one of the few people to whom he reached out directly, “You cannot see my face, for no human may see me and live” (Exodus 33:20).
  - b. Since we cannot meet God directly, we must depend on what he has revealed about himself. The Bible aids us here: “All Scripture is God breathed and is useful for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, and for training in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16).

5. God's independence from his creation
  - a. God is independent of his creation. Moses wrote, "Before the mountains were born, before you gave birth to the earth and the world, from eternity to eternity you are God" (Psalm 90:2). Similarly, all human creators are separate entities from what they create.
  - b. Even machines that learn were created by human creators who were not part of the machine. Nevertheless, some people think God and the universe are the same (called "pantheism") The Lord God is totally separate from and independent of His creation.

## B. The Being of God

1. God is not "physical."
  - a. We describe physical things as "natural" and those related to God as "supernatural." A physical component, i.e., a detectable body, is not part of God's being. Jesus said, "God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24).
  - b. None of our senses or measuring devices can detect God. St. Paul described God as "the blessed and only ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or is able to see. To him be honor and power forever! Amen" (1 Timothy 6:15,16).
2. We cannot comprehend God.
  - a. We cannot grasp anything about God directly with our minds. St. Paul wrote, "Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how untraceable his ways! 'For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his adviser?'" (Romans 11:33,34).
  - b. God was even more emphatic when he said, "Certainly my plans are not your plans, and your ways are not my ways, declares the LORD. Just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways, and my plans are higher than your plans" (Isaiah 55:8,9).
  - c. The LORD said, "Woe to anyone who argues against the potter who formed him.... Does clay say to its potter, 'What are you making? Your work looks like something made by a potter with no hands?'" (Isaiah 45:9).
3. The LORD is God.
  - a. God uses various names, but one name stands out from all others, the name "I AM." God exists in and of himself, and by his existence he most desires to be identified.
  - b. A psalmist wrote, "High above all the nations is the LORD. His glory towers above the heavens. Who is like the LORD our God? He is seated on high" (Psalm 113:4,5).

## C. The Knowledge of God ("Omniscience").

1. The need for knowledge and methodology
  - a. A creator needs the knowledge to design the final product so it will meet the need for which it is being designed.
  - b. The designer therefore must be a methodical analyst as well as having a vision for how the components of the product will work harmoniously together.

2. God's ability to design
  - a. God can see things in galactic proportions. A psalmist wrote, "Great is our Lord and mighty in power. To his understanding there is no limit" (Psalm 147:5).
  - b. "There is no creature hidden from him, but everything is uncovered and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we will give an account" (Hebrews 4:13).
  - c. "'To whom can you compare me as if we were equals?' says the Holy One. Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and see who created these things. See who brings out their army in great number and calls them all by name. Because of his great strength and mighty power, not one of them is missing" (Isaiah 40:25,26).
  - d. If God's understanding has no limit, then he cannot be caught by surprise. There is no danger in his forgetting some detail that would have made the universe less defective.

E. The Power of God ("Omnipotence").

1. Gauging God's power
  - a. Since the beginning of the 1800's, the power and capabilities of human inventions have grown rapidly. Indeed, the inventions created by humankind are impressive.
  - b. Many people gauge God's power by the capability of human inventions and tend to place God's ability to affect the physical realm somewhere between that of human devices and that of massive natural phenomena.
2. God's real power
  - a. God can truly do anything he pleases. Moses said, "The LORD your God is God of Gods and Lord of Lords, the great God, the mighty one and the awesome one, who does not show favoritism and does not take a bribe" (Deuteronomy 10:17).
  - b. "The LORD does whatever he pleases in the heavens and on the earth, in the seas and in all the depths" (Psalm 135:6).
  - c. Isaiah wrote, "His hand is stretched out, and who can turn it back?" (Isaiah 14:27).
  - d. "Let all the earth fear the LORD. Let all the inhabitants of the world revere him. For he said, 'Let it be,' and it was! He gave a command, and there it stood" (Psalm 33:8,9).



# Creation

## Chapter 2 – From Eternity

### A. Eternity

1. It is not a form of “time.”
  - a. *Eternity is not really a length of time but a condition of existence that is outside of our concept of time.* The Levitical chorus sang, “Stand up! Bless the LORD your God, who is from eternity to eternity” (Nehemiah 9:5).
  - b. We define time in terms of change, but God is “immutable” or “invariant.” “Certainly I, the LORD, do not change.” (Malachi 3:6). We can get an imperfect sense of this by considering people in photos who do not age. We might say they are “frozen in time.”
2. It is an attribute of God.
  - a. God dwells in eternity as we dwell in space and time, except eternity was not created by God. The LORD will always be the same and will always dwell in this “eternity.”
  - b. But, because only God is uncreated, eternity must be an attribute of God like His omnipotence or His mercy. If it were an independent entity, then it would confine God, and He would not be omnipotent. He literally dwells in His attributes.
  - c. We have no way to examine eternity apart from the revelation given in the Bible. St. Paul wrote “who [God] alone has immortality, who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or is able to see” (1 Timothy 6:16).

### B. God’s “Personal” Acts

1. The Son is begotten.
  - a. The person of the Father begat the person of the Son. This act of begetting happened in the realm of eternity. We do not understand it because the preincarnate Son, the second person of the Trinity, had no mother.
  - b. Jesus said, “For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:16).
  - c. St. John wrote, “This is how God’s love for us was revealed: God has sent his only-begotten Son into the world so that we may live through him” (1 John 4:9).
2. The Holy Spirit is spirated.
  - a. God in the persons of the Father and of the Son “spirated” (breathed out) the person of the Holy Spirit. This act is also called “procession.” We do not understand how it occurred in eternity, but we have solid biblical statements for it.
  - b. Jesus said, “The Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and remind you of everything I told you” (John 14:26).

- c. St. Paul wrote, “But you are not in the sinful flesh but in the spirit, if indeed God’s Spirit lives in you. And if someone does not have the Spirit of Christ, that person does not belong to Christ” (Romans 8:9).

### C. God’s “Preparatory” Acts

- 1. Decree of creation
  - a. “How many are your works, O LORD! In wisdom you made them all” (Psalm 104:24). Not only did the LORD understand what he was doing, but he did it based on the wise counsel existing within the Trinity from eternity.
  - b. “To him who by his understanding made the heavens” (Psalm 136:5).
  - c. St. Paul said, “From one man, he made every nation of mankind to live over the entire face of the earth. He determined the appointed times and the boundaries where they would live” (Acts 17:26).
- 2. Decree of redemption
  - a. God knew his creature man would fall into sin. God is perfect, and he cannot tolerate imperfection within his creation. A psalmist wrote, “Yes, the LORD approves of the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish” (Psalm 1:6).
  - b. God’s plan to deal with man’s rebellion would lead to something totally mind-boggling from a human vantage point. The LORD said to Ezekiel, “The soul who sins is the one who will die” (Ezekiel 18:4), yet God planned that another would die for man’s sins.
  - c. To describe this phenomenon, St. Paul’s wrote, “Even when you were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ by forgiving us all our trespasses” (Colossians 2:13).
- 3. Decree of predestination
  - a. St. Paul wrote, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. He did this when he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world, so that we would be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ. . . .” (Ephesians 1:3-6).
  - b. St. Paul also wrote, “We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God, for those who are called according to his purpose, because those God fore-knew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, so that he would be the firstborn among many brothers. And those he predestined, he also called. Those he called, he also justified. And those he justified, he also glorified” (Romans 8:28-30).
  - c. God did not predestine anyone to damnation in hell because St Paul wrote, “This is good and pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who wants all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:3,4). The writer to the Hebrews wrote, “it is appointed for people to die only once and after this comes the judgment.” (Hebrews 9:27). The judgment of those lost does not come until after their death since God wants all to have an opportunity to be saved.

# Creation

## 3. In the Beginning

### A. The Incredible Start

1. The place was nowhere. The time was no time. We are told that it was the beginning. “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1). What was going on here? What does it mean? The explanation is utterly amazing!
2. Space and time
  - a. God needed to make space where there had previously been only non-existence so he would have a place to insert His creation.
  - b. There was no time before God created it. Preexistent time would to some degree constrain the actions of God and make him somewhat less than almighty. He would be like us who are constrained by a timeline where events move relentlessly in one direction.
3. Out of nothing
  - a. The Hebrew word for “create” in Genesis 1:1 is *bara’*; when it is constrained by “in the beginning” and is an action of God, it must mean to create out of nothing.
  - b. We cannot imagine the non-existence of space. Space is the three orthogonal directions we have learned to understand and love—right and left, back and forth, up and down. Since there was no space before the creation, what was there?
  - c. There was no passage of time “before” God’s creation. God’s creation not only brought into existence the matter of the universe, but also the space that held it and the ability for it to change via time.

### B. The Initial State of the Earth

1. The scene on the ground
  - a. The Bible gives us a human view of how the creation would have appeared. “The earth was undeveloped and empty. Darkness covered the surface of the deep” (Genesis 1:2a).
  - b. This is what we would expect of a construction project. The contractor orders the supplies, and they are delivered and piled about in an apparently haphazard manner, awaiting the start of the building process.
2. The presence of the Holy Spirit
  - a. “And the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters” (Genesis 1:2b). In this verse, we see the result of one of God’s personal internal acts. The third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, is specifically mentioned.
  - b. Although God as a being is a spirit, the mention of the “Spirit of God” cannot be understood as a synonym for “God” in verse 1 because it differs from all the references to God associated with all the creative acts that follow in Genesis 1.

3. God's speaking

- a. "And God said, 'Let there be light: and there was light'" (Genesis 1:3). God addressed the inanimate, and it responded by doing His will.
- b. What can this mean? God is a spirit and has no physical mouth. The inanimate material to which he spoke had no ears. We might ask, "Did God utter words having sound, or was the speaking done in a different manner?"

4. The presence of the Son

- a. St. John wrote, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him everything was made, and without him not one thing was made that has been made" (John 1:1-3).
- b. God the Father begets God the Son in eternity, and God the Son acts as the creating agent of the Father at creation and as the revealer of God to mankind. This is the reason the internal acts of God in eternity are important.

C. The Significance of Light

1. God is light.

- a. We know little about the realm of eternity because we cannot see into it. Upon completion of the temple, King Solomon acknowledged this situation when he said, "The LORD has said that he dwells in thick darkness." (1 Kings 8:12).
- b. However, God himself is light, not darkness. St. John wrote, "This is the message we heard from him and proclaim to you: God is light. In him there is no darkness at all. If ...we walk in the light, just as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanses us from all sin" (1 John 1:5-7).

2. Light in the psalms

- a. The physical light foreshadowed the great spiritual light from God. King David wrote, "Yes, you light my lamp, O LORD. My God turns my darkness to light" (Psalm 18:28).
- b. He also wrote, "The precepts of the LORD are right. They give joy to the heart. The commandment of the LORD is bright. It gives light to the eyes" (Psalm 19:8).
- c. The great acrostic psalm says, "Your words are a lamp for my feet and a light for my path" (Psalm 119:105).

3. The greater light

- a. Isaiah wrote, "The people walking in darkness have seen a great light. For those living in the land of the shadow of death, the light has dawned" (Isaiah 9:2).
- b. Jesus said, "I am the Light of the World. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (John 8:12).

4. The first separation
  - a. “He separated the light from the darkness. God called the light ‘day,’ and the darkness he called ‘night’” (Genesis 1:5a). This action established periods for work and rest.
  - b. Jesus referred to this concept allegorically when he said, “I must do the works of him who sent me while it is day. Night is coming when no one can work” (John 9:4).

#### D. The “Days” of Creation

1. A calendar day vs. period of light
  - a. God conveyed that he created time by dividing it into periods. He called each period a “day” (in Hebrew, “*yom*”). “There was evening and there was morning—the first day” (Genesis 1:5b).
  - b. The same Hebrew word *yom* is used in the latter part of this verse that was used in the first part of the verse where God contrasted the period of light with the period of darkness.
2. A longer day?
  - a. There is no *a priori* reason to adopt any other meaning for the word *yom* than the one that we gain from a literal reading of Genesis 1:5, or of any of the verses in Genesis 1, namely, one terrestrial day.
  - b. In Exodus 20:11 and Exodus 31:17 the LORD Himself, in speaking to the people of Israel and to Moses, firmly asserted that He created the world in “six days.”

#### E. God’s First Separation of Materials

1. Water
  - a. On the second day, God began sorting and separating the materials that he had created on the first day. “God said, ‘Let there be an expanse between the waters, and let it separate the water from the water’” (Genesis 1:6).
  - b. The mention of water meant the Earth was not like a plasma or a neutron star. Water is a molecular substance composed of atoms, so the Earth was composed of molecules and apparently a mixture of water and solid materials.
2. The sky
  - a. “God made the expanse, and he separated the water that was below the expanse from the water that was above the expanse, and it was so. God called the expanse ‘sky’” (Genesis 1:7,8a).
  - b. What happened to the water God placed above the sky? Did it merely become the clouds? Was it used to regulate the Earth’s climate before the flood? Was it referred to again when “the floodgates of the sky were opened” (Genesis 7:11)?

3. Biblical understanding

- a. We must be aware of a general principle of biblical interpretation. In the Bible, God frequently described things using the reference points that were known to the people at the time when a particular part of the Scriptures was written.
- b. Moses wrote Genesis under God's inspiration so it would have made sense to the people 1400 years before Christ. We must be careful not to use our greater understanding of the physical world to try to box God in with our view of reality.

4. End of day two

- a. The second day ended as did the first, with a barren planet, but a planet in a greater state of organization. The Bible reports, "There was evening and there was morning—the second day" (Genesis 1:8b).
- b. The Earth has a complex structure, and whether God did organizational work on this structure on the second day, we have no way of discerning. Explanations of such structural work would have had little meaning to the people at the time of Moses.

# Creation

## Chapter 4 – Populating the Creation (Part 1)

### A. God's Second Separation of Materials

1. The gathering of waters
  - a. God began the third day by making major geological changes to the underlying planet that he had created.
  - b. “God said, ‘Let the waters under the sky be gathered together to one place, and let the dry land appear,’ and it was so. The waters under the sky gathered to their own places, and the dry land appeared” (Genesis 1:9).
2. Reshaping the Earth
  - a. Planet Earth, as we know it, has a core and various layers, as well as a magnetic field and the existence of volcanoes. Before day three it may have been different.
  - b. Living things require a stable environment, so God had to establish one. He gives only limited details about how He did this. What we see today has been corrupted by sin.
  - c. Although not mentioned, God had to create gravity because “the force of gravity” was essential for holding the components of the ground together.
  - d. God caused the solid components, such as rocks, cobble, sand, and dirt, to firmly cling together and placed some ground farther from the center of the earth.
  - e. God named these two components to help the readers. “God called the dry ground ‘land,’ and the gathering places of the waters he called ‘seas’” (Genesis 1:10a).
  - f. God reviewed his work and was satisfied. “God saw that it was good” (Genesis 1:10b).

### B. The Creation of Plant Life

1. The calling forth of plants
  - a. “God said, ‘Let the earth produce plants—vegetation that produces seed, and trees that bear fruit with its seed in it—each according to its own kind on the earth,’ and it was so” (Genesis 1:11). Naturally, the earth responded to its creator’s command.
  - b. “The earth brought forth plants, vegetation that produces seed according to its own kind, and trees that bear fruit with its seed in it, each according to its own kind, and God saw that it was good” (Genesis 1:12).
  - c. A soil so rich in nutrients that it could sustain numerous large and small plants, and even a lush garden (Genesis 2:8-14), had to be part of God’s creative process for plants.
2. Apparent age
  - a. The soil was only minutes old, but its apparent age was thousands of years old.
  - b. The actual age is the time that has elapsed since an object came into being.
  - c. The apparent age is the age that something appears to be to an observer or instrument.

3. Hidden creations
  - a. Plants depend on the atmosphere for raw materials, for bulk moisture, and for protection against the ultraviolet radiation of the sun.
  - b. For an oxygen-rich atmosphere to be built, oxygen would have to be generated by plants faster than it disappears through numerous common reactions. God gave the atmosphere an apparent age of several hundred million years at its creation on day 3.
  - c. Rain requires enough water vapor entering the atmosphere to provide the aqueous substance for rain, but there must also be favorable air currents and the presence of physical “triggers” to initiate condensation.
  - d. By day four, a protective mechanism in the Earth’s atmosphere against harmful radiation needed to be in place. Today, an ozone layer serves that purpose.
  - e. The presence of microorganisms is essential to both plant and animal life, and the number of different species/subspecies is estimated from ten million up to one trillion.

4. Notes on Day Three

- a. It is of great theological significance that God created plants before he created the sun.
  - b. “There was evening and there was morning—the third day” (Genesis 1:13).

## C. The creation of heavenly bodies

1. Levels of heaven
  - a. God created the components of the “first heaven” (the atmosphere) on the third day.
  - b. The “second heaven” (what we call “outer space”) He created the fourth day.
  - c. The third heaven is where God was thought to dwell.
2. The heavenly bodies and their purposes
  - a. “God said, ‘Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to divide the day from the night, and let them serve as markers to indicate seasons, days, and years’” (Genesis 1:14).
  - b. God told us the purpose of the lights, namely, to separate day and night and to mark the passage of time (i.e., “seasons” and “years”).
  - c. “‘Let them serve as lights in the expanse of the sky to give light to the earth,’ and it was so” (Genesis 1:15). Giving light was the second purpose for which they were created.
  - d. “God made the two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. He also made the stars” (Genesis 1:16).
  - e. “God set these lights in place in the expanse of the sky to provide light for the Earth, to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness. God saw that it was good” (Genesis 1:17,18).

## D. The sun

1. The geocentric mistake
  - a. God did not tell us that He placed the earth into orbit around the sun.
  - b. He did not tell us the earth rotates on its axis. People observed the sky and concluded all celestial objects orbited the earth.

- c. They tried to explain the movements in the heavens based on their misinterpretation of the Bible rather than based on observations of the physical world.
  - d. Celestial objects seemed to them to orbit the earth, and God created these objects after he created the earth, so they drew a logical but a false conclusion.
2. The sun's nature
    - a. The nuclear reactions in the center of the sun generate radiation by fusion over a large portion of the electromagnetic spectrum (including visible light).
    - b. Light photons in the sun travel an incredibly short distance before being absorbed by other nuclear particles. Innumerable cycles of reradiated and reabsorbed photons cause it to take several thousand years for light to reach the solar surface.
    - c. Based on its fuel consumption, the apparent age of the sun is 5 billion years.

E. The moon

1. Moon facts
  - a. The moon orbits the Earth.
  - b. The moon is not a primary light source, as it only reflects sunlight.
2. The apparent age of the moon
  - a. The moon's highly pitted surface is consistent with the moon having been bombarded with meteors over a very long period of time and having once been more malleable.
  - b. At the rate that meteors enter the Earth/moon system, it would have taken many million years for the moon to have acquired as many craters as we observe on it today.

F. The stars

1. Their properties
  - a. The stars produce radiation over the entire electromagnetic spectrum from gamma rays to radio waves. Rarely they cause neutrino bursts and huge gravitational waves.
  - b. The great distances to even the nearest stars prevent us from using probes to study them. In fact, they would not be visible from Earth even today if only natural processes had been involved in the propagation of their light.
  - c. The LORD not only created the sources of stellar radiation, but he also created the light rays between all those sources and the Earth so that the stars could be seen by Adam.
2. What does it all mean?
  - a. Did God create the stars as burning "suns" in distant places in the heavens or did he merely create the light that apparently comes from them?
  - b. We cannot decide between the models without closer examination.
  - c. "There was evening and there was morning—the fourth day" (Genesis 1:19).
  - d. God gave the universe an apparent age of several billion years and did not tell us why.



# Creation

## Chapter 4 – Populating the Creation (Part 2)

### A. Birds and sea creatures

1. The creation
  - a. “God said, ‘Let the waters swarm with living creatures, and let birds and other winged creatures fly above the earth in the open expanse of the sky’” (Genesis 1:20).
  - b. “God created the large sea creatures and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their own kind, and every winged bird according to its own kind” (Genesis 1:21a).
2. The “kinds”
  - a. To the first readers, these words conveyed a reassuring message. When two similar animals mated, they would produce young animals that were like them.
  - b. The Bible does not tell us whether “kind” is a generalization, such as “waterfowl,” or a very specific designation, such as “mallard duck.”

### B. Biodiversity

1. The species issue
  - a. Prior to the era of genetic knowledge, it was common to say that small variations, such as color, might have occurred since the creation but to firmly insist that “a duck is a duck and always was a duck.”
  - b. Animals that look very different can have the same genetic code (e.g., a caterpillar and a butterfly), while other animals that appear quite similar are genetically very different (e.g., rabbits and hares do not even have the same number of chromosomes).
  - c. Just because St. Paul wrote, “Flesh is not all the same kind. Instead, people have one kind of flesh, animals have another kind, birds another, and fish yet another” (1 Corinthians 15:39), we should not conclude that God divided living things into only four kinds at creation.
2. The assessment
  - a. “God saw that it was good. God blessed them when he said, ‘Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the waters of the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth’” (Genesis 1:21b,22).
  - b. God, moreover, did what he could not previously have done; he directly addressed other living beings. The objects of his creation on the fifth day were different from his previously created objects because they could choose, at least to some extent, how to behave and how to live their lives.
  - c. God instructed them to multiply in number. They were to procreate more of the same “kind.” While they could not create their offspring out of nothing as God had created them, their bodies could create them out of the materials in their environment according to the manner God had provided for them.
  - d. “There was evening and there was morning—the fifth day” (Genesis 1:23).

### C. The general creation of animals

1. Animals created by kind

- a. “God said, ‘Let the earth produce living creatures according to their own kind, livestock, creeping things, and wild animals according to their own kind,’ and it was so. God made the wild animals according to their own kind, and the livestock according to their own kind, and everything that creeps on the ground according to its own kind. God saw that it was good” (Genesis 1:24,25).
- b. The LORD separated what he had created into categories. Once again, he used the word “kind” to group the animals that he created, but also again, he used that word in such a manner that we cannot ascertain what he included within any particular “kind.”

2. Food for the creation

- a. The plants that God created on the third day could live directly from the nutrients in the soil and in the atmosphere and survive under God’s protective care.
- b. The animals, on the other hand, could not eat dirt or live simply by breathing air. They needed real food, and God provided it.
- c. “‘To every animal of the earth, and to every bird of the sky, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which there is the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.’ And it was so” (Genesis 1:30).

D. Wrapping up creation

1. Plants, animals, and bacteria

- a. God here made a clear distinction between animal life and plant life. While plants live and propagate, God declared that their deaths, which certainly occurred when they were eaten, were compatible with his creation being perfect. They were expendable.
- b. The presence of bacteria is essential to the survival of larger living creatures. They also died as part of the purpose of their existence to support larger life forms. In addition, their death and digestion were important in maintaining the quality of the soil.
- c. God instructed all of the animals he had created on days five and six to be herbivores. At the creation, therefore, God made animal life sacred. Neither man nor animals had the right to take the life of any animal. Furthermore, due to God’s command, animals were incapable of killing other animals because they did not have free will.

2. The conclusion

- a. “God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. There was evening and there was morning—the sixth day” (Genesis 1:31).
- b. The actions of God during creation week are far beyond our ability to comprehend. Moreover, God did much more than he directly revealed to us. We have attempted to fill in the gaps based on what we know about how natural processes work.

## Creation

### Chapter 5 – Continuing Revelation on the Creation

#### A. Old Testament History

1. The seventh day
  - a. “The heavens and the earth were finished, along with everything in them. On the seventh day God had finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had been doing” (Genesis 2:1-2).
  - b. “God blessed the seventh day and set it apart as holy, because on it he rested from all his work of creation that he had done” (Genesis 2:3).
2. Six days reaffirmed.
  - a. “For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and everything that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day” (Exodus 20:11).
  - b. “For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed” (Exodus 31:17).
3. God’ ownership
  - a. Moses wrote, “Indeed, the heavens and the heaven of heavens, the earth and everything that is on it—these belong to the LORD your God” (Deuteronomy 10:14).
  - b. King David said, “Blessed are you, LORD, the God of Israel, our father, from eternity to eternity. To you, O LORD, belong greatness, power, glory, victory, and majesty... everything in the heavens and on the earth belongs to you” (1 Chronicles 29:10,11).
4. Later affirmation
  - a. King Hezekiah of Judah prayed, “O LORD, God of Israel, you are seated above the cherubim. You alone are God over all the kingdoms of the earth. You made the heavens and the earth” (2 Kings 19:15).
  - b. The Levites sang, “You made the heavens—the highest heavens and their entire army, the earth and everything that is on it, the seas and all that is in them” (Nehemiah 9:6).

#### B. The Wisdom Literature

1. Job - God said, “Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?...Who determined its dimensions?...Who locked up the sea behind doors when it burst out of the womb?...I [the LORD] said, ‘You may come this far, but no farther. Here is the barrier for your proud waves.’...Have you ever set a time for the sun to rise?...” (Job 38:4-35).
2. Psalms
  - a. Ethan the Ezrahite wrote, “The heavens are yours, and yours also is the earth. You founded the world and everything that fills it. You created the north and the south....Your hand is strong. Your right hand is raised high” (Psalm 89:11-13).

- b. “Praise him, sun and moon....Let them praise the name of the LORD, because he commanded, and they were created” (Psalm 148:3-5).
  - c. “May you be blessed by the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth” (Psalm 115:15).
  - d. “My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth” (Psalm 121:2).
  - e. “May the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth, bless you from Zion” (Psalm 134:3).
3. Proverbs - Solomon wrote, “The LORD possessed me [Wisdom] at the beginning of his way, before his works of long ago.... before the origin of the earth. When there were no deep waters...when there were no springs filled with water....” (Proverbs 8:22-29).

#### C. The Prophets

- 1. Isaiah
  - a. “Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the eternal God. He is the Creator of the ends of the earth” (Isaiah 40:28).
  - b. “This is what the true God says, the LORD who creates the heavens and stretches them out, who spreads out the earth and everything that it produces” (Isaiah 42:5).
  - c. “I am the one who forms light and creates darkness, the one who makes peace and creates disaster. I am the LORD, the one who does all these things” (Isaiah 45:7).
- 2. Jeremiah
  - a. Jeremiah said that the LORD was not like the idols. “He who is the Portion of Jacob is not like these, because he is the Maker of all things (Jeremiah 10:16).
  - b. “Ah, LORD God! You are the one who made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm” (Jeremiah 32:17).

#### D. The Gospels

- 1. Matthew
  - a. “He [Jesus] got up, rebuked the wind and the sea, and there was a complete calm. The men were amazed, saying, “What kind of a man is this? Even the wind and the sea obey him!” (Matthew 8:23-27).
  - b. “Jesus came toward them, walking on the sea....Those who were in the boat worshipped him, saying, ‘Truly you are the Son of God!’” (Matthew 14:25-33).
  - c. He “took the seven loaves and the fish. After looking up to heaven, he blessed them....They picked up seven basketfuls of the broken pieces....” (Matthew 15:34-38).
  - d. “Seeing a fig tree by the road, he went up to it but found nothing on it except leaves. He said to it, ‘May there never be fruit from you again!’ Immediately the fig tree withered away.” (Matthew 21:19).
- 2. John
  - a. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him everything was made, and without him not one thing was made that has been made.” (John 1:1-3).

- b. Jesus: “Fill the [six] jars with water.” At Jesus’ command they took some of this water to the master of the banquet, and the water had become fine wine” (John 2:7-10).

#### E. The Apostles

1. Acts
  - a. “When they heard this...they raised their voices to God and said, ‘Master, you are the God who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and everything in them’” (Acts 4:24).
  - b. St. Paul and St. Barnabas said, “We are preaching the good news to you so that you turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and everything in them” (Acts 14:15).
2. Various apostles
  - a. “In past ages this mystery remained hidden in God, who created all things” (Ephesians 3:9).
  - b. “He [Jesus] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation...” (Colossians 1:15-17).
  - c. “You see...that the heavens came into existence long ago by the word of God and that the earth came together out of the water and between the waters” (2 Peter 3:5).
  - d. “In the beginning, Lord, you laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of your hands” (Hebrews 1:10).
3. Revelation - The saints in glory sing, “Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive the glory and the honor and the power, for you have created all things, and because of your will they existed and were created” (Revelation 4:11).



# **Creation**

## **Chapter 6 – Man – God’s Special Creature**

### **A. The Historical View of Man’s Creation**

1. The creation of man
  - a. “God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the sky, and over the livestock, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that crawls on the earth’” (Genesis 1:26).
  - b. The creation of man was part of God’s Decree of Creation that happened in eternity.
2. The image of God
  - a. “God created the man in his own image. In the image of God he created him. Male and female he created them” (Genesis 1:27).
  - b. The image of God was not just that man could reason but that he knew God’s will and was able to obey it perfectly.
3. The blessing and command
  - a. “God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it’” (Genesis 1:28a). This was similar to the command God had given to the animals.
  - b. “Have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth” (Genesis 1:28b).
  - c. God provided food for mankind by directing people to be vegetarians. “God said, ‘Look, I have given you every plant that produces seed on the face of the whole earth, and every tree that bears fruit that produces seed. It will be your food’” (Genesis 1:29).

### **B. The Functional View of Man’s Creation**

1. The second view of creation
  - a. “This is the account about the development of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens: No bushes that grow in the field were yet on the earth, and no plants of the field had yet sprung up, since the LORD God had not yet caused it to rain on the earth. There was not yet a man to till the soil, but water came up from the earth and watered the entire surface of the ground” (Genesis 2:4-6).
  - b. Already while the earth was still relatively barren, God had chosen what would be necessary to support man, even though he had not yet put these things in place.
2. The creation of man
  - a. “The LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being” (Genesis 2:7).
  - b. The Hebrew word for man is “*adam*,” which also became his name, and the Hebrew word for ground is “*adamah*.” Man also had a direct connection to God who breathed the breath of life into him. The details of the way God did this were not provided to us.

3. The garden

- a. “The LORD God planted a garden in Eden in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. Out of the ground the LORD God made every kind of tree grow—trees that are pleasant to look at and good for food, including the Tree of Life in the middle of the garden and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil” (Genesis 2:8,9).
- b. “A river went out from Eden to water the garden, and from there it divided and became the headwaters of four rivers. The name of the first river is Pishon. It flows through the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold, and the gold of that land is good. Incense and onyx stone are also found there. The name of the second river is Gihon. It is the same river that winds through the whole land of Cush. The name of the third river is Tigris. This is the one which flows along the east side of Assyria. The fourth river is the Euphrates” (Genesis 2:10-14).
- c. “The LORD God took the man and settled him in the Garden of Eden to work it and to take care of it. The LORD God gave a command to the man. He said, ‘You may freely eat from every tree in the garden, but you shall not eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, for on the day that you eat from it, you will certainly die’” (Genesis 2:15-17).

4. The mate

- a. “The LORD God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is a suitable partner for him.’ Out of the soil the LORD God had formed every wild animal and every bird of the sky, and he brought them to the man to see what he would call them. Whatever the man called every living creature, that became its name” (Genesis 2:18,19).
- b. Adam did his job. “The man gave names to all the livestock, and to the birds of the sky, and to every wild animal, but for Adam no helper was found who was a suitable partner for him” (Genesis 2:20).
- c. God’s demonstration succeeded. Adam found no suitable mate, so God acted to give Adam a mate. “The LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep. As the man slept, the LORD God took a rib and closed up the flesh where it had been. The LORD God built a woman from the rib that he had taken from the man and brought her to the man” (Genesis 2:21,22).
- d. “The man said, ‘Now this one is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. She will be called “woman,” because she was taken out of man’” (Genesis 2:23).
- e. “For this reason a man will leave his father and his mother and will remain united with his wife, and they will become one flesh” (Genesis 2:24).
- f. After their marriage, a man and a woman, i.e., a husband and his wife, are to be permanently united in intent and in action as if they were still physically one body, just as they were before God separated them.
- g. The Bible then talks about “shame.” “They were both naked, the man and his wife, and they were not ashamed” (Genesis 2:25). Because Adam and the woman were perfect, they had no evil to hide and could stand before each other or God without covering.

C. The Fall into Sin

1. Angels

- a. They were created at an unknown time during creation week.
- b. Satan led a rebellion against God, and he and his hosts were expelled from heaven.

## 2. The Fall

- a. “Now the serpent was more clever than any wild animal which the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, ‘Has God really said, “You shall not eat from any tree in the garden” ?’” (Genesis 3:1).
- b. The woman answered, “We may eat fruit from the trees of the garden, but not from the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden. God has said, ‘You shall not eat from it. You shall not touch it, or else you will die’” (Genesis 3:2,3).
- c. “The serpent said to the woman, ‘You certainly will not die. In fact, God knows that the day you eat from it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil’” (Genesis 3:4,5).
- d. “When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was appealing to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took some of its fruit and ate. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. The eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized that they were naked. They sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for their waists. They heard the voice of the LORD God, who was walking around in the garden during the cooler part of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden” (Genesis 3:6-8).
- e. “How blessed is the man who does not walk in the advice of the wicked, who does not stand on the path with sinners, and who does not sit in a meeting with mockers. But his delight is in the teaching of the LORD” (Psalm 1:1,2a).

## D. Old Testament History

1. “The LORD regretted that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with sorrow” (Genesis 6:6).
2. God was still willing to protect the lives of people from “Whoever sheds man’s blood, by man his blood shall be shed, for God made man in his own image” (Genesis 9:6).

## E. The Wisdom Literature

1. Solomon wrote, “Rich and poor have this in common: The LORD is the maker of them all” (Proverbs 22:2).
2. Solomon wrote, “Look, I have found only this: I have found that God made mankind upright, but they have gone off looking for many schemes” (Ecclesiastes 7:29).

## F. The Prophets

1. Isaiah wrote, “This is what the LORD, your Maker, says, the LORD who formed you from the womb, who will help you” (Isaiah 44:2a).
2. Our creator is also the Creator of everything. “You have forgotten the LORD, your Creator, who stretches out the heavens, who makes the earth stand firm” (Isaiah 51:13).

## G. The New Testament

1. Jesus said, “But from the beginning of creation, God made them male and female....Therefore, what God has joined together, let no one separate” (Mark 10:6-9).
2. St. Paul said to the Athenians, “From one man, he [the LORD] made every nation of mankind to live over the entire face of the earth” (Acts 17:26).
3. St. Peter wrote, “So let those who suffer according to the will of God entrust their souls to their faithful Creator while doing what is good” (1 Peter 4:19).

# Creation

## Chapter 7 – Preservation – God’s Continuing Creation

### A. God’s “Creative Hands”

1. God’s independence
  - a. Genesis 2:1 says, “The heavens and the earth were finished, along with everything in them.” We must not overread this to tie God’s hands to prevent further creation.
  - b. A psalmist wrote, “In fact, our God is in the heavens. He does everything that pleases him” (Psalm 115:3).
2. How God can create
  - a. God can make something out of nothing (*ex nihilo*). He created when Jesus fed thousands of people from meager food supplies (Matthew 14:13-21 and 15:32-38).
  - b. God can “create” by using materials that already exist, as when He “formed the man from the dust of the ground” (Genesis 2:7).
3. God’s “natural hand”
  - a. The first hand we might call his “natural” hand. Much of his preservation of his creation is done through the “laws of nature.”
  - b. By using his natural hand in a predictable way, God allows people to make plans for their futures. God gave us assurance that he would manage things in this manner when he said, “While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease” (Genesis 8:22).
4. God’s “supernatural hand”
  - a. With His “supernatural” hand God performs overt miracles that exceed what could happen by natural processes.
  - b. God caused the waters of the Jordan to “pile up” at the town of Adam and not flow down the Jordan valley until the Israelites had crossed the riverbed” (Joshua 3:14-17).

### B. The Old Testament

1. Divine punishment
  - a. God said, “Thorns and thistles will spring up from the ground for you” (Genesis 3:18a).
  - b. God said, “I myself am about to bring a flood of waters on the earth, in order to destroy all flesh under the sky that has the breath of life” (Genesis 6:17a).
2. The change in diet
  - a. God said, “Every living, moving thing will be food for you. I have given everything to you, just as I gave you the green plants” (Genesis 9:3).
  - b. The digestive tracts of herbivores and carnivores are significantly different, so God’s creative hand had to alter the carnivores’ DNA to make this diet change possible.

3. More punishments
  - a. “So the LORD scattered them from there over the face of the whole earth, and they stopped building the city. It was named Babel...” (Genesis 11:8,9).
  - b. “Then the LORD rained on Sodom and Gomorrah sulfur and fire out of the sky from the LORD. He overthrew those cities, as well as all the plain...” (Genesis 19:24,25).
4. Promises for good and ill
  - a. “He [God] will love you and bless you and multiply you. He will bless the fruit from your womb and the fruit from your soil,...” (Deuteronomy 7:13-15).
  - b. “The LORD will send on you a curse and confusion and opposition in every undertaking of your hand that you carry out, until you are destroyed and until you quickly perish...” (Deuteronomy 28:20-24).
5. The raw power of God
  - a. When God’s people were fleeing Pharaoh’s army, a strong east wind opened a way through the Red Sea for them (Exodus 14:21).
  - b. God stopped the sun and the moon from moving across the sky for a whole day (Joshua 10:13,14).
  - c. God sent an angel to kill 185,000 Assyrian soldiers to save Jerusalem (2 Kings 19:35,36).

## C. The Wisdom Literature

1. Job
  - a. Eliphaz the Temanite said, “He [God] does great things that are beyond investigation, and miracles that are too many to be counted” (Job 5:9).
  - b. Job said, “You [God] clothed me with skin and flesh. You wove me together with bones and tendons. You provided me with life and mercy...” (Job 10:11,12).
2. Psalms
  - a. King David wrote, “Love the LORD, all his favored ones! The LORD preserves the faithful, but he pays back in full the one who acts proudly” (Psalm 31:23) and
  - b. “The eyes of all look eagerly to you, and you give them their food at the proper time. He opens his hand, and he satisfies the desire of every living thing” (Psalm 145:15,16).
3. Proverbs
  - a. King Solomon wrote, “He [the LORD] protects those who walk on paths of justice. He guards the way of his favored ones” (Proverbs 2:8) and
  - b. “The LORD tears down the house of the arrogant, but he maintains the property line of a widow” (Proverbs 15:25).

## D. The Prophets

1. Isaiah
  - a. “Hear this, O heavens, and listen, O earth, for the LORD has spoken. I have raised children and brought them up, but they have rebelled against me” (Isaiah 1:2).

- b. The LORD finally asked, “Is my arm really too short to redeem? Do I not have enough power to rescue?” (Isaiah 50:2b).
2. Other prophets
  - a. “Do the worthless idols of the nations send rain? Do the skies provide the torrential showers? Is it not rather you, who are the LORD our God? Our hope is in you, because you are the one who does all these things” (Jeremiah 14:22).
  - b. God said, “Sowing will take place in peace. The vine will yield its fruit. The earth will yield its produce. The sky will provide its dew” (Zechariah 8:12).

## E. The Gospels

1. Miracles of healing
  - a. “Jesus traveled throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every sickness among the people” (Matthew 4:23).
  - b. “He said, ‘Young man, I say to you, get up!’ The dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother” (Luke 7:14,15).
2. Miracles of preservation
  - a. Jesus directed the people to look around themselves to see how the LORD was working for their good more powerfully than they could imagine.
  - b. He said, “For this reason I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink, or about your body, what you will wear....Certainly your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things” (Matthew 6:25-32).
3. Trusting God
  - a. Jesus said, “Then if you know how to give good gifts to your children, even though you are evil, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!” (Matthew 7:11).
  - b. He said, “Are not two sparrows sold for a small coin? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground without the knowledge and consent of your Father. And even the hairs of your head are all numbered. So do not be afraid. You are worth more than many sparrows” (Matthew 10:29-31).

## F. The Apostles

1. Miracles of healing
  - a. “He [Peter] turned toward the body and said, ‘Tabitha, get up!’ She opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter, she sat up. He gave her his hand and helped her stand up. Calling the saints and the widows, he presented her to them alive” (Acts 9:40,41).
  - b. “God was doing extraordinary miracles through St. Paul, so that even handkerchiefs or aprons that had touched his skin were carried away to the sick; their illnesses left them and the evil spirits went out of them” (Acts 19:11,12).

2. Trusting God

- a. “[God] said, ‘Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand before Caesar. And surely God has graciously given you all those who are sailing with you.’ So keep up your courage, men, because I believe God that it will be exactly the way I have been told” (Acts 27:24,25).
- b. St. Paul wrote, “Do not worry about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God” (Philippians 4:6).
- c. St. Peter wrote, “Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you” (1 Peter 5:7).

# **Creation**

## **Chapter 8 - God's Re-creation of Man**

### **A. The Aftermath of Sinning**

1. The ugly status
  - a. There was sheer panic in the air. A man and a woman stood among the trees clothed in aprons made hastily from the leaves of nearby plants. They knew God was coming, and what were they going to do?
  - b. He had promised them death, and even though they didn't fully comprehend what that meant, it couldn't be good. They would hide, of course, but what good would that do?
2. Enter God
  - a. "The LORD God called to the man and said to him, 'Where are you?'" (Genesis 3:9).
  - b. "The man said, 'I heard your voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, so I hid myself'" (Genesis 3:10).
3. Adam tried evasion.
  - a. "God said, 'Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree from which I commanded you not to eat?'" (Genesis 3:11). God was not fooled.
  - b. "The man said, 'The woman you gave to be with me—she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate it'" (Genesis 3:12). Technically, Adam's statement was true, but....
4. Eve followed suit.
  - a. "The LORD God said to the woman, 'What have you done?' The woman said, 'The serpent deceived me, and I ate'" (Genesis 3:13).
  - b. The woman watched Adam try to get off the hook by shifting the blame to her. God justly accused her, and she pointed her finger at the serpent. She blamed someone else.

### **B. The LORD's Unexpected Mercy**

1. The judgment began.
  - a. One can only imagine the range of punishments that God had available. Adam and the woman certainly sensed they were going to be slapped down hard. A perfect and just God could not tolerate sin, so a second chance seemed out of the question.
  - b. "The LORD God said to the serpent, 'Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all the livestock, and more than every wild animal. You shall crawl on your belly, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life. I will put hostility between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed. He will crush your head, and you will crush his heel'" (Genesis 3:14,15).

2. The meaning of this judgment
  - a. God cursed the animal form Satan took because agents of Satan will share his punishment.
  - b. Eve's immediate seeds were her children, but her ultimate seed was Christ. Satan's "seed" are the angels that fell and those people who choose to live in Satan's lies.
3. The woman's punishment
  - a. "I will greatly increase your pain in childbearing. With painful labor you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, but he will rule over you" (Genesis 3:16).
  - b. Discomfort and illness in pregnancy and hard labor and pain in childbirth would be common. Moreover, women would have to deal with husbands corrupted by sin.
4. Adam's punishment
  - a. "To Adam he [God] said, 'Because you listened to your wife's voice and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, "You shall not eat from it," the soil is cursed on account of you. You will eat from it with painful labor all the days of your life. Thorns and thistles will spring up from the ground for you, but you will eat the crops of the field. By the sweat of your face you will eat bread until you return to the soil, for out of it you were taken. For you are dust, and to dust you shall return'" (Genesis 3:17-19).
  - b. God held Adam accountable for the fall into sin because he was the leader.
  - c. The soil was no longer his willing partner, but it had been made hostile.
  - d. His body would suffer physical death and to return to the soil. He had no permanency.
5. Changes after sin
  - a. "The man named his wife Eve because she would be the mother of all the living. The LORD God made clothing of animal skins for Adam and for his wife and clothed them" (Genesis 3:20,21). Adam finally accepted that his wife had a distinct identity apart from him.
  - c. The lives of animals could henceforth be sacrificed for the benefit of mankind where previously only the plants could be sacrificed for that purpose.
  - d. "The LORD God said, 'Look, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil. Now, so that he does not reach out his hand and also take from the Tree of Life and eat and live forever....So he drove the man out, and in front of the Garden of Eden he stationed cherubim and a flaming sword, which turned in every direction to guard the way to the Tree of Life'" (Genesis 3:22-24).

## C. The LORD Created a People for His Plan

1. God's desire to save  
St. Paul wrote, "This is good and pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who wants all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:3,4).
2. Man's horrible rebellion
  - a. The LORD said, "I will wipe out mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth, along with the animals, the creeping things, and the birds of the sky, because I regret that I have made them" (Genesis 6:7).

- b. “Noah was a righteous man, a man of integrity in that generation. Noah walked with God...So God said to Noah,...‘Make an ark of gopher wood....’ (Genesis 6:9-16).
- 3. God narrowed the line of the Savior
  - a. God said to Abraham, “This is my covenant, which you shall keep, a covenant between me and you and your descendants after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised” (Genesis 17:10).
  - b. Israel bequeathed the line of God’s promised deliverer to Judah (Genesis 49:10).
  - c. After allowing the Israelites to grow into a nation, first in relative isolation in Canaan and then while in slavery in Egypt over a period of 400 years, God called Moses to be the prototype of a deliverer for the people of Israel (Exodus 3:1-4:17).

#### D. The LORD Created a Path for His Messiah

##### 1. The priests

These mediators were the members of the tribe of Levi. Aaron and his sons were made the priests, men who would intercede and make atonement for the people (Exodus 28:1). The rest of the Levites would instruct the people (Numbers 4:21-33).

##### 2. The kings

- a. God told David through Nathan, “Your house will stand firm, and your kingdom will endure forever before you. Your throne will be established forever” (2 Samuel 7:16).
- b. Once the LORD had confined the line of the Savior to David’s family, he was ready to permit a temple to be built for himself (1 Kings 5:1-9:5). The atonement cover of the Ark of the Covenant was where his people were to seek him through his priests.

##### 3. The prophets

Isaiah wrote, “To the law and to the testimony! If people do not speak according to this word, there will be no dawn for them” (Isaiah 8:20).

#### E. The LORD Sent His Promised Redeemer

##### 1. The nature of the Savior

- a. The fulfillment of the promise began with the miraculous announcement of the forthcoming birth of a son to the aged priest Zechariah (Luke 1:5-25).
- b. The stage was set for God’s greatest creation. Through the action of the Holy Spirit, the Son of God, the second person of the Trinity, was incarnated, that is, combined with human flesh, and was humbled by being placed in the womb of a lowly virgin.

##### 2. His active obedience

- a. As a true human, Jesus had to face the same temptations all other humans have had to face, but he did not fall to the temptations like Adam and Eve had. “One [Jesus] who has been tempted in every way, just as we are, yet was without sin” (Hebrews 4:15b).
- b. He had to face a greater degree of temptation because Satan realized who he was and the importance of disrupting God’s plan of salvation (Matthew 4:1-11).

3. His passive obedience
  - a. St. Paul declared, “For the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23a).
  - b. His crucifixion was a horrible punishment, but Jesus had to endure much more. He had to endure God’s punishment for the guilt of the sins of all the humans who were living, had lived, and would live.
4. The resurrection
  - a. God re-created life in the human body of Jesus, and he rose from the dead.
  - b. St. Paul wrote, “That is, God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them” (2 Corinthians 5:19).

## F. The LORD Sent His Spirit

1. The need to tell the message
  - a. Had God ended his creative work at this point, every human being would still have gone to hell. They would have been justified, by what we call “objective justification,” but they would not have known that God had granted this pardon for their sins.
  - b. The task of bringing the people to receive this saving message, that is, effecting “subjective justification,” was assigned to the Holy Spirit. Jesus commanded those who already believed to spread the word.
  - c. People could not believe what was unknown to them. St. Paul wrote, “So then, how can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one about whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without a preacher?” (Romans 10:14).
2. The message changes lives
  - a. Finally, a simple knowledge of the facts of God’s plan of salvation, i.e., a “head knowledge,” is not enough to save people from hell. A new person must be created by the Holy Spirit within everyone who will be saved.
  - b. The creation of this new person will lead the converted soul to repent of all his or her sins because the new person hates sin just as God hates sin. The new person will also want to do good works to serve God, not to earn salvation, but out of pure joy and thanksgiving.
  - c. St. Paul wrote, “As far as your former way of life is concerned, you were taught to take off the old self, which is corrupted by its deceitful desires, and to be renewed continually in the spirit of your mind, and to put on the new self, which has been created to be like God in righteousness and true holiness” (Ephesians 4:22-24).

## Creation

### Chapter 9 – Judgment – The End of the Creation

#### A. The Day of the LORD

1. The earth will be destroyed.
  - a. A psalmist wrote, “Your years go on through all generations. Long ago you laid a foundation for the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you remain. All of them wear out like a garment. Like clothing you will change them, and they will be changed. But you are the same, and your years will never end” (Psalm 102:24-27).
  - b. “Lift up your eyes to the heavens. Look closely at the earth beneath, because the heavens will vanish like smoke, and the earth will wear out like a garment, and its inhabitants will die like gnats. But my salvation will remain forever, and my righteousness will never be abolished” (Isaiah 51:6).
2. The Day of the LORD will be dreadful.
  - a. “Look, the Day of the LORD is coming, a cruel day, with wrath and fierce anger, a day to make the land desolate, a day to destroy its sinners there. For the stars of the sky and its constellations will not give their light. The sun will be darkened as it rises, and the moon will give no light....I will put an end to the arrogance of the insolent, and I will humble the pride of the ruthless” (Isaiah 13:9-11).
  - b. “Woe to those who long for the Day of the LORD! What good will the Day of the LORD be for you? It will be darkness and not light” (Amos 5:18).
3. The prophets warned about it.
  - a. The Day of the LORD is mentioned in Isaiah 2:12 and 34:8, Jeremiah 46:10, Lamentations 2:22, Ezekiel 7:19, 13:5, and 30:3, numerous times in Joel 1 and 2, Obadiah 15, and in Zephaniah 1-3.
  - b. Sometimes the phrase was used in terms of a severe local punishment inflicted on the people for their sins, but more often it was a reference to the severe final judgment on those who reject the LORD and do not repent.
  - c. “Look! I am going to send Elijah the prophet to you before the great and fearful day of the LORD comes! He will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers. Otherwise, I will come and strike the land with complete destruction” (Malachi 4:5,6).
  - d. Before the prophets, the phrase “the Day of the LORD” does not appear in the Bible.
  - e. All these passages from the prophets made clear that when the Day of the LORD arrived, God was going to use the same power he used to create the world to uncreate it, that is, to rearrange the elements of his creation or to destroy them.

## B. Jesus Prophesied Judgment Day

1. Jesus warned of Judgment Day
  - a. He said, “I must do the works of him who sent me while it is day. Night is coming when no one can work” (John 9:4).
  - b. He noted, “No one knows when that day and hour will be, not the angels of heaven, not even the Son, but only the Father” (Matthew 24:36).
2. Judgment Day would be no natural phenomenon.
  - a. Jesus said, “Immediately after the misery of those days, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky. And at that time all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory” (Matthew 24:29-31).
  - b. He also said, “And on the earth nations will be in anguish, in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the surging waves, people fainting from fear and expectation of the things coming on the world” (Luke 21:25,26), and
  - c. “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne....separating the sheep from the goats” (Matthew 25:31,32).

## C. The Apostles Reaffirmed Jesus’ Prophecy

1. The dreadful promise
  - a. St. Paul wrote, “Concerning the times and dates, brothers, there is no need to write to you...that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. When people are saying, ‘Peace and security,’ destruction will suddenly come on them, like labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will certainly not escape” (1 Thessalonians 5:1-3).
  - b. St. Peter wrote, “But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. On that day the heavens will pass away with a roar, the elements will be dissolved as they burn with great heat, and the earth and what was done on it will be burned up.” (2 Peter 3:10).
2. The old heaven and earth are replaced.
  - a. The LORD will use his almighty power to bring his Genesis 1 creation to an end and to bring all people to judgment before his Son Jesus. St. John wrote, “Then I saw a great white throne and the one who sat on it. The earth and the sky fled from his presence, and no place was found for them. (Revelation 20:11).
  - b. The LORD will create a new place for his elect to dwell. “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, because the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. And the sea no longer existed” (Revelation 21:1).
  - c. Theologians disagree whether God will completely destroy the current universe and create the “new heaven and new earth” out of nothing (*ex nihilo*) or whether after purging the universe of its evil, he will reshape it into the new home for mankind. We are dealing with the Lord God Almighty here, and he will do what he knows to be best no matter how strong an argument we advance that he should handle matters differently.

# Creation

## Chapter 10 – The Lutheran Confessions

### A. The overview

1. *Sola scriptura*
  - a. We believe all the doctrines of Christianity solely because the Bible reveals them to us. If something is not revealed in the Bible, then it has no bearing on our salvation. It is an irrelevant matter, and we do not teach it as doctrine.
  - b. We not only need to believe what the Bible teaches, we must be ready to state clearly what we believe. St. Peter wrote, “Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give a reason for the hope that is in you” (1 Peter 3:15b).
2. Why draft confessions?
  - a. At any point in history, some doctrines might be in dispute. At such a time a confession might be drafted to clearly state the biblical teachings being challenged.
  - b. Confessions must not add to or subtract from what the Scriptures teach.
  - c. Because the Lutheran Confessions teach what the Scriptures teach, we subscribe to (i.e., accept) them *quia*, which means “because,” not merely *quatenus*, which means “in so far as,” they agree with the Scriptures.
  - d. God’s creation of the world was not a point in contention in the eras when the confessions contained in the Book of Concord were developed. The references they make to creation are part of their discussion of other matters.

### B. The Ecumenical Creeds

1. The Apostles’ Creed
  - a. “I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.”
  - b. This sentence firmly declares a personal belief in the divine creation of the universe.
2. The Nicene Creed
  - a. “I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible.”
  - b. “And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made.”
3. The Athanasian Creed
  - a. The creed declares the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are individual persons of the Trinity and are all eternal, infinite, and uncreated. Together these persons compose the Godhead, and they have no existence independent of each other.
  - b. They were all present when the creation of the world was begun in Genesis 1:1. Therefore, this creed affirms God was not created in whole or in part but that the world was created by God.

### C. The Large and Small Catechisms

1. Luther's Small Catechism
  - a. Luther states the meaning of the first article of the creed as "I believe that God has made me and all creatures. He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my limbs, my reason, and all my senses, and still preserves them."
  - b. He adds to this explanation, "He protects me from all danger and guards me and preserves me from all evil."
  - c. In explaining the 4<sup>th</sup> petition of the Lord's Prayer, Luther wrote that "daily bread" was "everything that belongs to the support and needs of the body, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, home, fields, cattle, money, goods, a pious spouse, pious children, good government, good weather...faithful neighbors, and the like."
  - d. Because God has created for us everything we need, we are to use these gifts of God as he intended them to be used. Since God is the great Creator of everything, Luther insisted God had the right to give us these commandments.
2. Luther's Large Catechism
  - a. In discussing the Apostles' Creed as an entirety, Luther wrote, "God has created us for this very reason, that He might redeem and sanctify us" (LC II.64).
  - b. In LC I.133, Luther explained the promise that is attached to the Fourth Commandment as more than a *quid pro quo* deal with God.
  - c. In LC II.13-16, Luther explained everything God did, no matter how great or how small, is wrapped up in the word "Creator." Luther also reminded us that we cannot even see all the things that God has created for us.
  - d. Luther returned to the benefits that God has created for us through civil authorities in the fourth petition of the Lord's Prayer (LC III.73-75). When there is tranquility, it is easy for us to forget the good that God carries out through our governments.
  - e. In LC I.26-28, Luther reminded us we must worship God alone because all good things come from him who can give to us much more than we can imagine. Nevertheless, God often works through agents that we realize can be either the laws of nature or the creatures that serve as God's physical hands.

### D. The Unaltered Augsburg Confession and the Apology

1. The drafting of the confessions
  - a. Philipp Melanchthon wrote the Augsburg Confession in 1530.
  - b. The Roman Catholics responded in 1530 with the Confutation.
  - c. Melanchthon wrote the Apology to the Augsburg Confession in 1531.
2. The Unaltered Augsburg Confession
  - a. Article I of the confession states, "He [God] is the maker and preserver of all things visible and invisible" (AC I.2).

- b. It continues, “These three persons [Father, Son, and Holy Spirit] are of the same essence and power” (AC I.3).
  - c. The article entitled “Original Sin” begins “Our churches teach that since the fall of Adam, all who are naturally born are born with sin” (AC II.1).
  - d. “Our churches teach that the Word, that is, the Son of God, assumed the human nature in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary. So there are two natures—the divine and the human—inseparably joined in one person” (AC III.1&2).
  - e. “Through the Word and Sacraments, as through instruments, the Holy Spirit is given. He works (creates) faith, when and where it pleases God in those who hear the good news” (AC V.2). When God makes something new, he creates.
  - f. Article XVI entitled “Civil Government” confesses that “all governments are created and put in place by God” (AC XVI.1).
3. The Apology
- a. Article XXIII entitled, “The Marriage of Priests,” attacks the Roman church’s rule preventing priests, monks, and nuns from marrying. It bases its argument on the creative work of God.
  - b. “This love of one sex for the other is truly a divine ordinance.” The Apology thus firmly traces its argument back to the creation.
- E. The Formula of Concord
- 1. The history
    - a. The Formula of Concord was developed through a long process involving many of the most gifted Lutheran scholars of the later sixteenth century.
    - b. It contains a detailed “Solid Declaration” and a summary called the “Epitome.” While most of the articles in the Formula deal with issues involving God’s plan of salvation, the first article entitled “Original Sin” heavily referenced creation theology.
  - 2. Article I
    - a. Matthias Flacius had overstated the biblical position on original sin and claimed it was the very substance of the human soul.
    - b. This meant that God was creating sin as he created new souls for people at their conception and that He could not redeem souls if they themselves were original sin.
    - c. If sin was the substance/essence of a human soul, then either Jesus was not human, or he was a sinner. In either case, he could not be our Savior.
    - d. The Lutheran theologians rejected Flacius’ argument by appealing to the divine creation. They wrote, “God created not only the body and soul of Adam and Eve before the fall, but also our body and soul after the fall....and still recognizes them as his work” (Ep I.4).
    - e. To address the problem of purifying the human nature of its incredible corruption, they wrote, “Only the new birth and renewal of the Holy Spirit can and must heal this deranged, corrupted human nature” (SD I.14). These writers’ commitment to God as the Creator was therefore three-fold—God had directly created our first parents, he still creates all human beings, and he creates new spiritual life in those who are being saved.



# Creation

## Chapter 11 – Science and Theology

### A. Theology

1. The need for a standard
  - a. Christian theology is the search for and proclamation of the truth about God and his plan of salvation for mankind. It is based completely on divine revelation. But how do we determine if something is true? For truth to have any meaning it must be testable against a standard.
  - b. Without a standard, the validity of any statement is in doubt. If we all don't play by the same rules, we will not be able to determine whether a particular operation or behavior is proper and legal. In theology, we must establish a standard by which to judge statements that people claim to be true or false. We call this standard "hermeneutics."
2. Key principles of Lutheran hermeneutics
  - a. The Scriptures are the inerrant, verbally inspired Word of God.
  - b. Scripture rather than reason must be used to interpret Scripture.
  - c. Unless indicated otherwise by the text, the text must be taken literally.
  - d. Clear passages are used to understand less clear passages.
  - e. Each doctrine has an unambiguous passage teaching it that is called a *sedes doctrinae*.
3. Practical points of theology
  - a. The Bible does not change. There will be no new evidence to cause people to reach a different conclusion about spiritual truth. The "canon" of the Bible is closed.
  - b. While portions of old manuscripts are occasionally found, such as the Dead Sea Scrolls, these finds have not altered a single doctrine.
  - c. Some people corrupt biblical hermeneutics by introducing human reason or non-biblical principles that permit them to interpret the Scriptures more to their liking.

### B. Science

1. Understanding what it is
  - a. Science is looking for truth, and it has a fundamental assumption and a methodology (hermeneutics) that unite the rules and the strategy science uses to search for truth.
  - b. The framework of science is inductive reasoning as it is applied to the universe. In inductive reasoning a small sample of the members of a population is analyzed, and then a model is formed to generalize what has been observed to the whole population.
2. How it works
  - a. The fundamental assumption of the natural sciences (i.e., the physical and biological sciences) is that "all observations of natural phenomena can be explained in terms of the inherent properties of matter, energy, space, and time."

- b. Science relies solely on the properties of matter, energy, space, and time, which are to a large extent not yet known and which must be learned over time by experimentation. Scientific truth will therefore change as new discoveries are made, but Bible-based theological truth will never change.
- 3. Evidence
  - a. All the evidence used to study theology is already completely present in the Bible. It is available to everyone today, and it has been available for many centuries.
  - b. New scientific evidence is continually being discovered. Scientific evidence is also affected by the nature of what is being studied. Experiments often cannot be exactly duplicated, and the elimination of all experimenter bias can be difficult.
- 4. Hermeneutics
  - a. Lutheran hermeneutics is a systematic process that involves 1) identifying all the possible meanings of each word and phrase, 2) comparing that passage with other passages on the same topic, and 3) consulting the work of previous interpreters.
  - b. Scientific hermeneutics is called the “scientific method.” Evidence is carefully gathered and validated and then models to explain it are created. After review by experts in the field, models are provisionally accepted if they explain all the evidence and reworked if they don’t. The result of this process is called “scientific truth.”
  - c. The text of the Scriptures never changes, but new evidence in science is continually being produced or discovered. For this reason, all scientific truth is only provisional. Theories of science are always in flux, though some are more stable than others.
  - d. Theological truth was revealed to man to make him wise unto salvation. Scientific truth is sought to improve the living conditions of humanity and to satisfy human curiosity.

## C. Reason versus Logic

- 1. Logic (deductive reasoning)
  - a. Deductive reasoning defines a “domain” by giving it a set of rules, elements, and operators. Because it is defined by its human creators, every statement we can make about that domain is either absolutely true, absolutely false, or indeterminable.
  - b. In deductive reasoning we cannot learn anything not established by the definitions used to create the domain. Both theology and science use deductive reasoning.
- 2. Reason
  - a. “Reason” is a philosophical term that is not based on deductive reasoning or inductive reasoning. Reason in this sense, when applied to theology or science, means drawing a conclusion based on whether something makes sense to the human mind.
  - b. E.g., rationalizing, Christ can be one person with both a divine and a human nature.
  - c. E.g., rationalizing the delocalized presence of an electron.
  - d. *Neither in His revelation in His Word nor in his structuring of His creation is the LORD required to be rational by human standards.* “The LORD does whatever he pleases in the heavens and on the earth, in the seas and in all the depths” (Psalm 135:6).

- e. The confusion between logic and reason arises from the failure of people to appropriately define the domain in which they apply logic. This makes the logic unsound.

#### D. The Roots of the Dispute over Creation

- 1. Assumption of biblical theology
  - a. The fundamental assumption of biblical theology is that the Bible is the inerrant, verbally inspired Word of God. If this assumption is true, then we must conclude about how the world came into existence based on what we find in the Bible.
  - b. We will find it states very clearly the LORD created the world in six days. This assertion is independent of whether one believes it. There is no wiggle room in what can be understood from the biblical revelation.
- 2. Assumption of the natural sciences
  - a. The fundamental assumption of the natural sciences is that all observable phenomena can be explained in terms of the inherent properties of matter, energy, space, and time. If true, then there are no supernatural beings, so the world must have evolved naturally.
  - b. Scientists constrain their domain for purely practical purposes. If their fundamental assumption were not made, how would they know whether any observed phenomenon of nature was the result of natural processes or of the intervention by a supernatural being? This situation would make all scientific explanations of nature meaningless.
- 3. Conflicting assumptions
  - a. The disagreement between science and theology over the origin of the universe is rooted in conflicting fundamental assumptions that underlie their domains. They have different definitions of what constitutes evidence that can be used to establish truth.
  - b. Both fundamental assumptions cannot be true; one or both must be false. Because of this, it is impossible to resolve whether the universe was created or evolved. It takes faith to believe the fundamental assumption of either side.

#### E. Milieu of Science

- 1. Type of science
  - a. In the “hard sciences,” (e.g., physics) the entity being studied can be isolated from its environment, thereby eliminating interferences.
  - b. In the “soft sciences” (e.g., pharmacology), researchers cannot completely isolate the entity being studied (e.g., drug metabolism) from other factors (e.g., stress).
  - c. In the observational sciences (e.g., astronomy), scientists cannot do experiments on the entities of interest.

2. The logical fallacies of all science

- a. False assumptions invalidate models by distorting the conclusions drawn from the evidence.  
If the fundamental assumption of science is false, all theories, no matter how apparently sound, are rendered indeterminant. The existence of the almighty God makes science's fundamental assumption false. (False Premise Fallacy)
- b. New evidence may invalidate established theories. (Hasty Generalization Fallacy)
- c. Just because a theory perfectly accounts for all results does not mean it gives the right explanation for their occurrence. All science suffers from this problem because correlation does not prove causation. (Affirming the Consequent Fallacy)

# Creation

## Chapter 12 - Creation Apologetics

### A. Background

#### 1. Apologetics

- a. Apologetics is not about winning arguments. Its purpose is to show the position we hold is a logically sound position given the assumptions we have made and given the evidence based on those assumptions.
- b. To accomplish this, we do not ridicule our opponents or question the honesty of their work. We do not misstate their position to make a strawman we can easily knock down. We respond to the best of their arguments, not dwelling on any obvious mistakes.
- c. It is important to remember that scientists are not trying to prove evolution. They have concluded the universe came about through large-scale evolutionary changes as a corollary of their fundamental assumption, not based on their scientific investigation.

#### 2. Matter

- a. All matter is composed of elements. Each atom, the smallest unit of an element, has a nucleus that contains an integer number of protons, called the atomic number, and of neutrons.
- b. Each unique arrangement of protons and neutrons is called an “isotope.” Most isotopes are radioactive and decay into other isotopes, emitting radiation until they reach a stable (i.e., non-radioactive) isotope.
- c. Radioactive decay is a first-order kinetic process and can be measured precisely with modern particle counters and mass spectrometers.

#### 3. Distance in space

- a. Although light travels incredibly fast, it does not travel instantaneously, so we cannot see any event from which the light has not yet reached us.
- b. The nearest star is 25,000 trillion miles or 4.3 lightyears away.

### B. Physics - the age of the Earth

#### 1. Age and apparent age of the Earth

- a. The LORD placed great emphasis on the lineage between the man who first sinned and the Savior whom God sent to save mankind from the consequences of sin. That lineage is outlined in Luke 3:23-38. Based on such biblical genealogies, the age of the Earth since its creation appears to be about 6000 to 7000 years, perhaps as much as 10,000 or 12,000 years.
- b. If we look at all the isotopes that naturally occur on the Earth, we find that all the stable isotopes exist, and all the radioisotopes consistent with the Earth being more than a billion years old also exist, but none exist consistent with it being less than a billion years old.

#### 2. Accepting the Earth as God made it

- a. Is it possible new evidence might be found to change this estimate of the Earth’s apparent age? Extremely unlikely. All isotopes of an element are found together.

- b. The apparent age that God gave the Earth and that has been measured by scientists does not impact our belief in what is revealed in Genesis 1. We need only point out why there is a difference between the actual age of the Earth and what scientists measure.

### C. Cosmology – the big picture

- 1. What is it?
  - a. After Albert Einstein developed the theory of general relativity, physics began to be applied to astronomical data to create the field of astrophysics and later of cosmology.
  - b. Cosmology data is gathered from viewing the whole electromagnetic spectrum coming from space, as well as from the rare neutrino bursts and from large gravitational waves.
  - c. The evidence gathered has allowed cosmologists to develop the big bang theory in incredible detail. They currently estimate that the universe is about 14 billion years old.
  - d. Dark matter and dark energy, which are postulated to make up 95% of the substance of the universe, have never been seen, although their effects have been detected.
- 2. Limitations
  - a. Unless something can be brought into the laboratory or unless a laboratory can be sent to it, any model that fits what is observed from the Earth may be the correct explanation. This is the manner in which our eyes are fooled by the backdrops for sets in movies.
  - b. The important point is that God created light before it could have arrived from stars, due to the speed of light, based on what is revealed in Genesis 1:16. This means God has controlled what man has seen in the heavens since the fourth day.

### D. Geology – the structure of the Earth

- 1. What is in the Earth?
  - a. Layers of different types of soil and rocks.
  - b. Fossilized bones and rock impressions of plants and animals that do not exist on Earth today.
  - c. Minerals smeltable into metals and burnable substances like coal, oil, and natural gas.
- 2. Plate tectonics
  - a. The “plate tectonic model” says that the Earth’s surface, both its land and its sea, are resting on dozens of plates of various sizes. These plates slowly slide past each other, collide with each other to form mountain ranges, part from each other to form troughs in the sea.
  - b. The edges of the plates and the plates’ speed and direction of motion have been mapped in great detail. It is postulated that as the plates interact, they scrape material from each other, much as when two automobiles sideswipe.
  - c. Trace mineral analysis has greatly strengthened the ability to validate geological models.
- 3. Limitations
  - a. Geologists must sometimes use less reliable dating methods, involving rock-wasting, sedimentation rates, and embedded fossils, although not as extensively as in the past.
  - b. Geology is primarily an observational science, where experimentation cannot be performed on large-scale processes.

### E. Paleontology – the development of life

1. What paleontologists do
  - a. Paleontologists study fossils to build maps of how species supposedly evolved from one-celled organisms to the creatures that we encounter today, including man.
  - b. They do have a large amount of quality evidence, and they work with geologists to place their evidence onto the geological calendar of the events that happened on Earth.
2. Apologetics
  - a. We cannot know how or when God buried the fossils because the Bible does not mention fossils. God could have done this any time after He began creating the world.
  - b. We cannot know whether all the fossils are the remains of real plants, animals, and anthropoids that lived or whether some or all of them are created artifacts.
  - c. Moses warned the Israelites, “If a prophet or an interpreter of dreams arises among you, and he predicts a sign or wonder for you, and the sign or wonder that he promised you comes true, and he says, ‘Let’s go after other gods that you do not know, and let’s serve them,’ do not listen to the words of that prophet or that interpreter of dreams, because the LORD your God is testing you to see whether you really love the LORD your God” (Deut. 13:1–3).

## F. Biology – the origin of life

1. Who can create?
  - a. The Bible states that God created the universe out of nothing on the first day but that he can also create things out of preexisting matter as he did in the rest of Genesis 1.
  - b. Mankind is limited to creating things out of preexisting matter. Man can create artificial diamonds and change the locations of land and water through building dams and canals.
2. Could man create life?
  - a. People have long bred plants and animals to create new generations with distinctive characteristics. They have bred animals across species to create mules from horses and donkeys.
  - b. Since scientists developed the technology to sequence the DNA of plants and animals, they have been able to isolate genes from one species and move them into another species.
  - c. The Bible never states that man could not create life forms through his own processes. The LORD did not restrict man when he gave him “dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the sky, and over the livestock, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that crawls on the earth” (Genesis 1:26).
3. “Could life evolve spontaneously?”
  - a. All agree the process would have been incredibly complex and improbable, yet researchers in the life sciences generally think it happened. Now they need to establish a path through a labyrinth of problems and to prove each necessary step is feasible and could be succeeded by the next step in the process in a natural environment.
  - b. The apologist can remain idle because the burden of proof is on the scientists to demonstrate the whole process before they can convincingly argue it could have happened.

## G. Archeology – the origin of human culture

1. An observational science
  - a. Numerous artifacts of human civilization have been found buried in the ground. Archeologists have used these to study the movements and cultural development of peoples.
  - b. If their excavations are dated within the last five thousand years, there is little that a creation apologist would find of concern.
  - c. The further back archeologists try to go, the more they need to rely on carbon-14 for dating. However, it is precisely in this era that the carbon-14's concentration in the atmosphere might have been significantly different, rendering the dates meaningless.
2. Apologetic issues
  - a. Cuneiform, the oldest writing form, dates to 3400 BC. The Maya calendar begins in 3114 BC, although its development may have been more recent.
  - b. Without firm anchor points and with a questionable primary measuring tool for time, dating more ancient archeological sites is highly speculative, and we should treat all claims with deep skepticism.

## H. Summary of apologetic approaches

1. No challenge to Scripture
  - a. Genesis 1 gives us information about creation that indicates God created entities with an apparent age; therefore, we can easily explain why scientists might find an apparent age of the Earth much older than its actual age.
  - b. The creation of new forms of life in the laboratory is in line with God giving man dominion over the other life forms.
2. The Bible does not mention....
  - a. Some models, such as those from geology and paleontology, are consistent with the evidence that can be found, but that evidence is not inconsistent with the Bible because the Bible makes no mention of what these fields are studying.
  - b. Simply because evidence is consistent with a scientific model does not prove that the model is correct. The logical fallacy of affirming the consequent prevents this. We simply reply we do not know why it exists because the almighty God has not told us.
3. Give the opponents the burden of proof
  - a. In cosmology it is impossible to experimentally probe the universe on which cosmological models are built because cosmology is an observational science.
  - b. Demonstrating a path of reaction steps between the chemical elements and advanced life forms in an environment that would permit all the steps to occur in sequence without human intervention is an incredibly difficult task.
  - c. We are under no obligation to defend against scientific speculation.

# **Creation**

## **Chapter 13 - Flawed Apologetics**

### **A. Things to avoid**

1. Defending God
  - a. Apologetics is not about protecting God or his reputation. What can puny humans do to protect the omnipotent God?
  - b. Humans are always tempted to show their “superior” intelligence by coming to the rescue of God when he seems to falter or become a bit doddery.
2. Teaching God
  - a. Trimming the message of God’s Word to make it agree with the “discoveries” of science.
  - b. Disproving science.
  - c. Developing their own science by restricting God’s actions.

### **B. Theistic evolution**

1. The roots
  - a. Universities contained faculties in areas such as religion, law, medicine, mathematics, and science. Scholars regarded themselves as one community attempting to learn a unified truth.
  - b. That common fabric of thought began to unravel when scientific research produced evidence seemingly incompatible with the revelation given in the Bible.
2. Tenets of theistic evolution
  - a. The prevailing cosmological model.
  - b. Evolution and natural selection within species.
  - c. Humans as a product of evolution.
  - d. Humans also having a spiritual nature.
3. Theistic evolution is incompatible with the Christian faith.
  - a. Samuel the prophet said, “The Splendor of Israel will not lie or change his mind, because he is not a man, who changes his mind” (1 Samuel 15:29).
  - b. St. Paul stated his apostleship was “based on the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began” (Titus 1:1,2).
4. Theological problems
  - a. If the text of Genesis 1 & 2 is not true, then the fundamental assumption of biblical Christianity that the Bible is the inerrant, verbally inspired Word of God is false.
  - b. If mankind evolved from other life forms, then it would be of like substance with them. Mankind would be just a stage in biological evolution and could not be held morally responsible by God.
  - c. Without a special intervention in history by God, mankind could not have become different morally than any other species.

### C. Intelligent design

1. The teleological argument
  - a. The underlying premise of intelligent design is that the universe is so complex and so fine-tuned it could not have evolved naturally without active guidance of some intelligent agent.
  - b. The eukaryotic cell, which is the type of cell present in most living organisms, is often used as an example of such incredible complexity.
2. Intelligent design is bad science.
  - a. It violates the fundamental assumption of science.
  - b. Snowflakes with thousands of different patterns of six-fold symmetry fall in great numbers out of the chaotic environment of the clouds.
  - c. We cannot deny that natural processes can of themselves generate complexity; in fact, they often do. Therefore, the logical argument in favor of intelligent design fails.
3. Mental anchor points
  - a. We have a mental anchor price for what we desire to buy. If the listed price is dramatically higher or lower than that anchor price, we are unlikely to buy.
  - b. The complexity we see in a situation is dependent upon our experiences, not just the actual level of complexity that exists.
  - c. A magician can bedazzle us if we do not know how he does his tricks.
5. The problem of proof
  - a. To prove a complex entity, such as a eukaryotic cell, could arise naturally, scientists must perform the extremely difficult task of examining possible pathways until they find one.
  - b. To prove that some entity could not have come about naturally requires solving the halting problem, which is impossible. Because of this, intelligent design advocates will never be able to produce valid verifiable evidence to disprove evolution.
  - c. If we accept the fundamental assumption of biblical theology, then we will believe God created the world in six terrestrial days. Whether the world is too complex to have evolved by itself is consequently irrelevant.
6. Intelligent design is not specific to the LORD.
  - a. In attempting to establish the need for an “intelligent designer,” i.e., a “god,” intelligent design advocates have weakened the certainty expressed in the Bible. The LORD is not *per se* interested in our belief in a “creator god.”
  - b. No person will be saved merely because he or she believes the world was created by a divine being. Creation is only one part of the plan involving God’s relationship with mankind that the LORD decreed in eternity.

#### D. Creation Museums

1. Nature of museums
  - a. Museums are established to influence people to adopt the museum founders' worldview on some theme. Museum administrators know people are not only curious but are also easily manipulated when their feelings are involved.
  - b. Museum visitors should not regard displayed materials as necessarily an accurate representation of all that is known about the theme of the museum.
2. Gullibility
  - a. Creation museums cater to those who desperately want to see tangible evidence to validate their belief in creation. Such people have a poor understanding of science or theology and have little ability to judge the accuracy of what is presented to them.
  - b. These museums therefore give Christians a false sense of security, encouraging them to rely on the works of man rather than on the Word of God for their faith.

#### E. Creation Science

1. Attacking science – Method 1
  - a. Creation science tries to find evidence disproving or casting doubt upon an evolutionary theory in some branch of science.
  - b. Evidence collected by creation science workers often fail to meet the accepted standards for scientific evidence. Most of their evidence is never shared with the scientific community.
  - c. Their evidence is presented to the scientifically untrained public, often with claims that have not been verified by a falsification challenge.
  - d. The first method of creation science is a lose-lose proposition for Christians.
2. Creating alternate models – Method 2
  - a. If God intervened in the physical world, creation science folk could never be certain if what was observed was the result of the laws of nature or of divine intervention.
  - b. Creation science ignores what God clearly declared to enable itself to build its models. It assumes God practices what has been called a “conservation of miracles.”
  - c. Moses wrote, “Do not add to the word that I am commanding you, and do not subtract from it” (Deuteronomy 4:2).
  - d. Whenever an unscriptural principle is used to attempt to clarify or to buttress our understanding of the Scriptures, our doctrine becomes corrupted.
3. Changes in science
  - a. The world of science has radically changed since the 1970's. Scientific evidence is being gathered, sorted, and archived in amounts and at speeds even the best scientists of previous eras could never have imagined.
  - b. Without access to this data and the supercomputers to process it, those out of the loop, such as those trying to develop creation science models, have little chance of proposing anything that cannot readily be disproved or that has not been previously considered.

4. Biblical theology versus creation science
  - a. Scripture is a rock that does not change and was given by God.
  - b. Even legitimate science is worse than sand as a foundation; it is a quagmire of evidence and human assumptions concerning how to interpret it.
  - c. Based on the history of science, we can say with certainty 1) over time the amount of evidence will increase, 2) the assumptions for interpreting it will change, and 3) whole lines of reasoning will be abandoned.
  - d. Who would build a defensive position on such a shifting mass when an unmovable rock was available? Who would put even one pillar on such boggy ground when all pillars could be placed on the rock? The rock on which we may stand secure is already ours, but we shall never own the quagmire.

#### F. Summary

1. The LORD called the world into existence. He gave it an apparent age. He created life, diversified it, and took care of it. He created mankind and dealt with people after they rebelled against their loving Father. He used his creative powers to carry out his plan of salvation.
2. We see this world as in a darkened glass, and our understanding of the things of God is feeble.
3. In our creation apologetics we need to follow Jesus' advice to "be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves" (Matthew 10:16). We must remain committed to what God has revealed and not second-guess him where he did not think it wise to give us more complete information. And if we trust in God, we must also trust in his Word.
4. We must rely on the Holy Spirit to change hearts when we proclaim the whole counsel of the Scriptures rather than on our own shrewdness to change minds when we advance human arguments. Human arguments and evidence cannot aid the Holy Spirit in his work.