

The Doctrine of Creation

How it all began

I want to begin today with a question: when you are telling someone about the gospel, where do you, or most Christians begin? Usually, most Christians begin at the cross or maybe even the birth of Christ, but usually at the cross. Here's the problem with that...

If we begin at the cross, we begin at the climax of the gospel story. No story begins at the climax. We tell people that Jesus died for our sins; but what is sin? How did sin get here? If sin brought brokenness and death, then was there ever a time where it wasn't so?

We *must* start at the very beginning! The Creation narrative is extremely important and often times, we shrug it off as if everyone knows it and that it is not important.

What better place to go than Genesis 1 itself? Turn there if you have your Bibles.

Theological Principles from Creation Story...

1. God Eternally Existed before anything Else (vs. 1).

1. "In the beginning God..." this asserts that He was before the beginning. Remember when we talked about the person of God, we asserted that He is eternally existing. He is not constrained by time and is not created, so we say He always has been, He is, and He always will be.
2. Nothing else existed before Him. He created the universe *ex nihilo*. This means He created everything out of nothing. When we create things, we need raw materials but when God creates things, He does so out of nothing.

2. The Trinity was Present in Creation (vs. 2, 26; Jn 1:1-5).

1. "... and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters." Here we see the Holy Spirit present in creation.
2. "Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to our likeness...'" The use of the plural here points to the Triune Godhead involved in making us.
3. Read John 1:1-5. God the Son (Jesus) was present in creation.
4. The entire Trinity was present in Creation.

3. Creation took place in seven Literal Days.

1. Over and over again, the word for "day" is used: יום
2. The same formula is used in Hebrew each time: "and it was evening, and it was morning, the _____ day."
3. Plus, Genesis is a narrative, thus it is going to be literal and not use metaphoric language as the apocalypse does in Revelation.

4. The Days of Creation:

1. The heavens and the earth. He created light which resulted in the beginning of day and night (1:1-5).
2. God divided the waters above (the clouds, sky) from the waters below (seas, rivers, lakes, oceans, etc). (1:6-8).
3. God gathered the waters so that the dry land appeared. He named the former “seas” and the latter “earth.” He also made the plants (1:9-13).
4. God created lights in the heaven to distinguish seasons and years (1:14-19).
5. God created sea creatures and flying creatures. He blessed them to be fruitful and multiply (1:20-23).
6. God created land animals. He created man in His image and blessed Him, and told Him to be fruitful and multiply and rule over everything else (1:24-31; 2:7-25).
7. God rested and blessed the sabbath day as holy (2:1-4).

5. The Imago Dei and Creation Mandate:

1. The Imago Dei (Image of God).
 1. See vs. 26-27...
 2. We bear the image of God in who we are and what we do. This shows the value that we hold as humans. Now, we will discuss next week how that image is broken, however, we still bear God’s image.
 3. This is where those communicable attributes of God are revealed.
 4. No other creature or creation bears the image of God.
2. The Creation Mandate (Cultural Mandate).
 1. See vs. 28...
 2. We are told to get married, have babies, lead them to the Lord, and rule over creation.
 3. Too many Christians will neglect this, and this is why we are in a birth rate collapse. Part of making disciples is literally making new people.
 4. Uncomfortable to talk about but the Church has been silent on it for way too long.

6. God’s View of Creation:

1. Turn to 1:31...
2. God sees His creation as “very good.” The Hebrew word “tov” was used over and over in this passage.
3. God’s creation is good!
4. For too long, Christians (particularly in the lower church models) have viewed the physical as something bad and to be escaped from. It’s not. God made His creation *good*.
5. If you are going to accurately tell the gospel story, you must begin at the good creation! Now, as Romans 8 says, creation groans in its waiting to be restored at the return of Christ. One day, we will return to the way it should be.
6. The gospel story is about God restoring all things to their intended glory. Not escaping creation. Rather, we are to live in and take dominion over Creation.

Concluding thoughts:

“In God’s work of *creation*, He made the universe and all that is in it, and all very good. Creation was the first step in the execution of God’s decree for His glory. It began time and history. It showed that God, the Creator, is infinitely greater than His creatures. The work of creation distinguishes the biblical view of God from polytheism, pantheism, panentheism, and atheism. The doctrine of *creation ex nihilo* (“out of nothing”) teaches that God did not form the world out of material that already existed. Genesis 1 says that God made the whole world, including mankind, in six days, which is the most accurate interpretation of the narrative” (Dr. Joel Beeke).

Any thoughts or questions?