

## Theology

Our Saviour Evangelical Free Church

### Creation, Providence, Prayer

Key Concepts:

- God is the Creator of everything
- God reigns providentially over all He has created
- Prayer is a gift from God

Pages covered in Bible Doctrine by Wayne Grudem: 124-183

### Review from Session 3

Define a communicable attribute of God. Name one particular attribute that caused you to draw closer to God or worship Him more fully.

What are the three foundational true statements about the nature of the Triune God?

Is it necessary to believe in the Trinity to be considered a “Christian?” What other viewpoints exist?

### Creation

God created the universe ex nihilo. (Latin for “out of nothing.”)

This includes two primary types of a creation: physical and spiritual.

Read Genesis 1:1 and Colossians 1:15-17. What are the roles of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in creation?

The creation of Adam and Eve, what **must** we believe?

1. Adam and Eve were historical people.
2. God created Adam and Eve as, at least, adolescent humans.
3. Adam and Eve were the first humans.

Why should we believe these things?

1. The Bible is clear on this record.
2. The Pentateuch is full of warnings against compromise with the beliefs of other cultures.
3. The genealogies of 1 Chronicles 1 and Luke 3 treat Adam as historical.
4. The Apostle Paul believed in a historical Adam (Rom. 5:12-21; 1 Cor. 15:21-22, 45-49), so much so, that He based the doctrine of original sin and guilt along with his doctrine of the second Adam (Jesus Christ) on this fact. Without a historical Adam, these doctrines fall apart.

*[Paul] most definitely wanted to teach us that Adam and Eve were real historical figures. When you refuse to take a biblical author literally when he clearly wants you to do so, you have moved away from the traditional understanding of the biblical authority. . . .If Adam doesn't exist, Paul's whole argument—that both sin and grace work 'covenantally'—falls apart. You can't say that 'Paul was a man of his time' but we can accept his basic teaching about Adam. If you don't believe what he believes about Adam, you are denying the core of Paul's teaching.*

-Tim Keller, *Christianity Today* June 2011

Why did God create the universe?

God created the universe to **show His glory**. Read Psalm 19:1-2. See also Isa. 43:7; Rev. 4:11.

Also, God said the universe was “very good.” He delights in it.

Scripture and the Findings of Some Natural Scientists

“No Final Conflict” – Francis Schaeffer’s phrase stating that, when all the facts of **science** are known and our understanding of **Scripture** is perfect, there will be no contradictions between scientific discovery and Biblical truth. See *Grudem's list of Schaeffer's areas of possible disagreement among Christians relating to the creation narratives on page 274.*

Modern Theories Inconsistent with Scripture:

1. **Darwinian** Evolution
2. **Theistic** Evolution

How old is the earth? Two views.

Old Earth: **The universe is 15 billion years old and the earth is 4.5 billions years old.**

1. Day-Age View

Problems: the way God seemed to go about creating things is very different from how they are done now.

2. Literary Framework View

Problems: very few proponents. There is quite a bit of ambiguity and the first verses of Genesis don't match up nearly as nicely as people would like.

Why: This view seems to have several plausible explanations and have little or no trouble incorporating the latest and best findings of modern science.

Young Earth: Creation is approximately 10,000-20,000 years old. We are best able to ascertain the age of the earth through the given records of the Bible, particularly the genealogies.

1. Creation with an appearance of age (Mature Creationsim).

Problems: fossils, why would God create something "dead" already?

2. Flood Geology

No professional geologists have been persuaded by this theory, Christian or non-Christian. That doesn't seem very credible.

Why: Biggest proponents call for strong, explicit Biblical support of this idea. You use the genealogies and this is what you come up with.

Conclusions:

From D.A. Carson, *The God Who is There*. God is. God made everything that is non-God. There is only one God. God is a talking God. We must believe these rudimentary things as a foundation for the rest of our relationship with God and the rest of His revelation in the Bible.

*A word about humility related to the Creation/Evolution Debate (and, I suppose, debates in general ☺):*

## God's Providence

Three Primary Elements:

1. Preservation (Heb. 1:3): God maintains everything in the way it was created.

2. Concurrence (Eph. 1:11): God works through what He has created to bring about His will.
3. Government: God directs all things to accomplish His purposes.

What about evil? Does God cause evil?

1. God uses all things, including evil for His glory and our good.
2. God never does evil and is never blamed for evil.
3. God rightly judges moral creatures for the evil they do.
4. We should never seek to do evil.
5. This is an area of mystery.

The Relationship Between God's Decrees and Human Actions

Before the creation of the world, God decreed to bring about everything that happens. This does not absolve humans of responsibility or negate the validity of their choices or actions. Scripture teaches that we are still responsible for our actions. Our actions and prayers are often the means through which God has chosen to act and bring about His will.

## Prayer

Why does God want us to pray?

1. God wants us to pray because prayer expresses our trust in God and is a means whereby our trust in him can increase.
2. Prayer brings us into deeper fellowship with God, and he loves us and delights in our fellowship with him.
3. In prayer God allows us as creatures to be involved in activities that are eternally important.

Does God promise to respond to all prayer?

God hears every prayer, but not every prayer is answered in the way we would hope. More on unanswered prayer later.

Should we pray to the Father or to the Son?

We may pray to either and we may pray to the Holy Spirit, however, this happens less often in Scripture.

What are some possible reasons for unanswered prayer?

- We don't always pray as we ought [Rom. 8:26]

- We don't always pray according to God's will [James 4:3]
- We don't always ask in faith [James 1:6-8]
- Sometimes we think that one solution is best, but God has a better plan, even to fulfill his purpose through suffering and hardship. [Gen. 50:20]

### Application Questions:

The fact that God created the universe should cause us to worship Him. What aspects of creation do you find particularly amazing and how do they cause you to glorify God with your life because of them?

How do you approach debates/discussions/arguments related to theological topics? Are you humble? Is there someone you may need to seek forgiveness from having been overly harsh in the past.

Our prayers matter. In fact, if we believe in a providential God, they matter more because they may just be the means through which the all-powerful God of the universe has decreed to bring about His good and perfect will. What do you need to pray for?

Do you enjoy praying? Why or why not? What can you do to increase the quality and quantity of your prayer life? How and when will you do this?

Reading for next session: p. 187-196, 210-225