



LECTURE 1

WHY IS A STUDY ON THE DOCTRINE OF CREATION IMPORTANT?

A Study on the Doctrine of Creation informs us of who we are, why we are here, and who is the God that put us here. A study on the doctrine of Creation forms a foundation for our dignity and worth as human beings and conveys our purpose & place in God's creation.

DIFFERENT WAYS GENESIS HAS BEEN READ?

In Genesis 1-11 we have what is called *primeval history* spanning the time from Creation to Abraham. Biblical Scholars are divided on whether or not Gen. 1-11 can give us an accurate chronology before the time of Abraham. Some scholars say with certainty that genealogical records can give us an accurate chronology, while others claim "we are not given enough information in the Bible to date creation.

- Historical Literal approach – This approach has a few variations...under the Young Earth Creationist (YEC) view Genesis should be read as a literal 7 day 24 hr creation. The Creation account gives us an accurate historical record of the beginnings. A second variation to this approach is the Gap Theory, which sees a gap of a few billion years b/w Gen 1 & 2. A third variation to this approach is the Day Age Theory, which sees each day of creation as periods of indefinite length. These views are held among many protestant evangelicals.
- Allegory – The message of Creation is the Spiritual truth contained in the allegory. As is often the case with allegories, the precise meaning that's supposed to be conveyed varies with the reader.
- Theological Framework - The question of the historical truth is trumped by question of theological truth...so that what matters are the theological truths the narrative conveys. Another way of saying this is the Bible is most concerned with being reliable in matters of theological truth...it's not intended to be a science or history textbook, and hence need not be entirely accurate in those areas.
- Ancient Near Eastern Literature - The creation account is viewed as a type of Ancient Near Eastern literature which parallels other Ancient Creation myths found in Mesopotamian Culture these include Babylonian myths (Enuma Elish, Atrahasis, Adapa), Ugaritic Baal Myth & Sumerian creation myths (Epic of Gilgamesh). These myths are not viewed as authoritative, rather they are viewed as giving the reader an eye into the culture in which the creation narrative of Genesis was communicated with a specific theological intent (monotheism, supremacy of Israel's God over the forces of nature, evil entering the created order etc.).
- Prequel to Pentateuch – In one sense all of these views expressed above see Gen 1-11 as a prequel to the Pentateuch, but one position which Wes will teach in the coming weeks sees the Creation in a very specific way as a micro view of the macro structure of Israel inhabiting the promised land of Canaan.

PURPOSE:

To inform & equip our congregation to better understand the doctrine of Creation by studying Gen 1 & 2.

METHOD:

We will read & interact with the text of Gen 1 & 2 in order to better understand the major prevailing views, which are accepted as Orthodox Christian teaching. During the course of our study we will look at 8 different views regarding Creation.

10 things (Almost) Every Christian can agree on Concerning Creation (Todd Wilson)

1. The doctrine of Creation is central to the Xian faith.
2. The Bible, both Old and New Testaments, is the Word of God – inspired and w/o error in all that it teaches. Therefore whatever Scripture teaches is to be believed as God's instruction, w/o denying that the human authors of Scripture communicate using the cultural conventions of their time.
3. Genesis 1-11 are historical in nature, rich in literary artistry, and theological in purpose. These Chapters should be read with the intent of discerning what God says through what the human author has said.
4. God creates and sustains everything. This means that he is as much involved in natural processes as He is in supernatural events. Creation itself provides unmistakable evidence of God's handiwork.
5. Adam and Eve were real persons in a real past, and the Fall was a real event with real – and devastating – consequences for the entire human race.
6. Human beings are created in the image of God and are thus unique among God's creatures. They possess special dignity w/in creation.
7. There is no final conflict b/w the Bible rightly understood and the facts of science rightly understood. God's two books, Scripture and nature, ultimately agree. Therefore Christians should approach the claims of contemporary science w/ both interest and discernment – confident that all truth is God's truth.



8. The Christian faith is compatible w/ different scientific theories or origins, from young earth creationism to evolutionary creationism, but incompatible w/ any view that rejects God as the creator and sustainer of all things. Christians can therefore differ on their assessment of the merits of various scientific theories of origins.
9. Christians should be well-grounded in the Bible's teaching on creation but always hold their views with humility, respecting the convictions of others and not aggressively advocating for positions on which evangelicals disagree.
10. Everything in creation finds its source, goal and meaning in Jesus Christ, in whom the whole of creation will one day achieve eschatological redemption and renewal. All things will be united in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

CHURCH FATHERS:

Ambrose: But they say that the sun can be said to be alone, because there is no second sun. But the sun himself has many things in common with the stars, for he travels across the heavens, he is of that ethereal and heavenly substance, he is a creature, and is reckoned amongst all the works of God. He serves God in union with all, blesses Him with all, praises Him with all. Therefore he cannot accurately be said to be alone, for he is not set apart from the rest. (Exposition of the Christian Faith, Bk V, Ch II)

Athanasius: but the earth is not supported upon itself, but is set upon the realm of the waters, while this again is kept in its place, being bound fast at the center of the universe. (Against the Heathen, Book I, Part I)

Augustine: Let not the philosophers, then, think to upset our faith with arguments from the weight of bodies; for I don't care to inquire why they cannot believe an earthly body can be in heaven, while the whole earth is suspended on nothing. For perhaps the world keeps its central place by the same law that attracts to its center all heavenly bodies. (City of God, Bk XIII, Ch 18)

Chrysostom: For He not only made it, but provided also that when it was made, it should carry on its operations; not permitting it to be all immovable, nor commanding it to be all in a state of motion. The heaven, for instance, hath remained immovable, according as the prophet says, "He placed the heaven as a vault, and stretched it out as a tent over the earth." But, on the other hand, the sun with the rest of the stars, runs on his course through every day. And again, the earth is fixed, but the waters are continually in motion; and not the waters only, but the clouds, and the frequent and successive showers, which return at their proper season. (Homilies to Antioch, Homily XII)

DEFINITIONS

Hermeneutics – The *science of interpretation*, especially of Scripture. The branch theology that deals with the principles biblical exegesis.

Primeval History – A history of the first years of the world's existence.

Concordism – in the context of Origins debate within the Bible, *scientific concordism* affirms that there is an alignment between the Bible and the facts of science.

Non-Concordism – in the context of origins debate within the Bible *non-scientific concordism* believes that God did not put modern scientific facts in the Bible. Instead he used a process called accommodation, whereby God accommodated to communicate theological truth through the contemporary cosmological understanding of the culture in which the narrative of creation was communicated.

Geocentric – Earth is at the center of the universe

Heliocentric – Sun is at the center of the universe

Cosmology – a specific theory or model of the origin and evolution of the universe. A study of the Origins of the universe.



CREATION EQUIPPING CLASS SPRING 2018

Feb 11	Introduction to Creation	Nick
Feb 18	Opening the Book and Discovering the Issues	Nick
Feb 25	Elder Installation (No Class)	
Mar 4	Young Earth Creationism & Appearance of Age Interpretation	Nick
Mar 11	Origins (A Scientific View dismissing evolution)	Dr. Wade Warren
Mar 18	Origins – Evolutionary Creation	Dr. Gregg Davidson
Mar 25	Gap Theory Interpretation & Day Age Interpretation	Nick
Apr. 1	Easter Sunday (No Class)	
Apr 8	Literary Framework Interpretation	Dr. Jeff Audirsch
Apr 15	Historical Creationism	Wes
Apr 22	Cosmos as Temple Interpretation	Nick
Apr 29	Members Meeting (No Class)	
May 6	Q & A, Class Discussion	Nick
May 13	Mothers Day (No Class)	
May 20	Meet at Grace Mid-City (optional)	3-6 pm Lecture Series



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