

4. Doctrine of Creation

1. The triune God of the Bible created everything out of nothing¹ by the power of his Word, declaring it to be good, for the purpose of displaying his glory (Gen 1:1-2, 31; Ps 19:1-2; 33:6, 9; John 1:3; Col 1:16; Heb 1:2).
2. All things visible and invisible, material and spiritual, have been created by the triune God, exist for him, and are continually sustained by him² (Col 1:16; Heb 1:3; 11:3).
3. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were each present and active in creation. Thus, the universe exists as an expression and extension of their Trinitarian fellowship and love. The Father, “from whom are all things” (1 Cor 8:6), was the primary Agent in initiating creation. Likewise, all things were made through the Son (John 1:3, 10; 1 Cor 8:6; Col 1:16; Heb 1:3), and the Holy Spirit completes, fills, and gives life to God’s creation (Gen 1:2-4; Job 33:4; Ps 104:30; 2 Cor 3:6).
4. Creation was intentionally and specifically designed by God. Therefore, any theory of evolution which assumes randomness in evolving species and lifeforms, and does not see an infinite, sovereign, personal God as responsible for creating the universe with intelligent design, is to be rejected (Gen 1:20-27; Ps 33:6, 9; 104:24).
5. The main purpose of the creation account in Genesis 1-2 is to present God as the source of, and absolute sovereign over all creation, not to specify the age of the earth. We believe that the age of the earth is a tertiary doctrinal matter, meaning that it is understood and accepted differently among orthodox Christians, and we welcome a diversity of convictions among our members.³ Within this debate, there are two broad positions: A “young earth” view that the earth is approximately 6,000 to 20,000 years old, and an “old earth” view that the earth is approximately 4.5 billion years old. The arguments for these two views are complex, and we do not believe this is an issue over which Christians should break fellowship. Humility, grace, and dependence upon the Holy Spirit must define our relationships as we study God’s Word and world together.⁴

¹ Theologians often describe God’s creative act with the Latin phrase *ex nihilo*, meaning “out of nothing.”

² For more, see *Doctrine of the Trinity: The Father*, 1-3.

³ However, we believe that a biblical view on the age of the earth must also affirm point 4 (above). See *Prolegomena: Our Theological System and Tradition* for more on the distinction between primary, secondary, and tertiary doctrinal matters.

⁴ As Grudem concludes: “The possibility must be left open that God has chosen not to give us enough information to come to a clear decision on this question, and the real test of faithfulness to him may be the degree to which we can act charitably toward those who in good conscience and full belief in God’s Word hold to a different position on this matter.” Wayne Grudem, *Bible Doctrine* (Zondervan: 1999), p. 139.

Doctrine of Creation

6. God has given humanity, starting with Adam and Eve, the responsibility of caring for his created world. “Ruling” and “subduing” the earth (Gen 1:28) suggests that the resources of the earth are to be developed and enjoyed in ways that cause mutual flourishing for all life on earth—not abuse and exploitation for selfish or material gain. Thus, we embrace a care and concern for creation that respects the earth and its resources as gifts from God for the benefit of all humanity and all God’s creatures (Gen 1:26-30; Ps 8:6-8).⁵
7. The effects of humanity’s rebellion against God extend to all creation. Creation is groaning under “bondage to decay” (Rom 8:21) and is waiting to be redeemed, just as humanity is waiting. Therefore, ever since humanity’s rebellion against God, the created world has been subject to “thorns and thistles” (Gen 3:18), as well as fires, floods, drought, storms, and other natural disasters (Gen 3:17-19; Rom 8:18-25).
8. Ultimately, hope for the redemption of creation lies not in what humans may do but in what God has promised to do. He will bring severe destruction, by which he will purge creation of evil and evildoers. This destruction will be followed by comprehensive restoration, resulting in a “new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells”⁶ (2 Pet 3:13; see also: Isa 24:1-23; 65:17; 66:15-24; 2 Pet 3:1-13; Rev 11:15-18; 21:1-5).

Resources for Further Study

Beginner

- J.B. Stump and Stanley Gundry, *Four Views on Creation, Evolution, and Intelligent Design*, 2017.
- Keith Mathison, *A Reformed Approach to Science and Scripture*, 2013.

Intermediate

- Jonathan Edwards, *The End for which God Created the World: Updated to Modern English*, ed. by Jason Dollar, 2014. (originally published in 1765).
- Wayne Grudem, *Bible Doctrine*, 1999.
- Kenneth Keathley and Mark Rooker, *40 Questions about Creation and Evolution*, 2014.

Advanced

- Meyer Moreland, et. al., *Theistic Evolution: A Scientific, Philosophical, and Theological Critique*, 2017.
- Kenneth Keathley, J.B. Stump and Joe Aguirre, *Old Earth or Evolutionary Creation?: Discussing Origins with Reasons to Believe and BioLogos*, 2017.

⁵ See *Doctrine of Humanity: Creation of Humans*, 4.

⁶ For more on New Creation, see *Doctrine of Last Things: Eternity and New Creation*.

Doctrine of Creation