

First Baptist Church of Fairburn
 Systematic Theology
 March 29, 2015

The Doctrine of God
 “Creation”
 (Part One)

“Why, how, and when did God create the Universe?”

Key Questions for Understanding the Doctrine of Creation

1. Why did God create the world? What was God’s main purpose?
2. How did God create the world? Did he use evolution? Did he use six 24-hour days?
3. When did God create the world? How old is the earth; a few thousand years, or millions?

A. God created the universe out of nothing

1. **Biblical evidence for creation out of nothing (“ex nihilo”).** “Ex nihilo” is a Latin phrase meaning, “out of nothing.” Theologians have often used this phrase to indicate that before God began to create the universe, nothing else existed except God himself. This means that God did not use any previously existing materials when he created the universe
 - a. **Genesis 1:1** – *“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.”* The phrase, “heavens and the earth” includes everything that’s in existence (earth, planets, sun, solar system, stars, galaxies, and universe).
 - b. **Psalms 33:6, 9** – *“By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and by the breath of his mouth all their host...for he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm.”*
 - c. **John 1:3** – *“All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made.”* The phrase “all things” is best taken to refer to the entire universe (Acts 17:24; Heb. 11:3).
 - d. **Acts 14:15** – *“Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men, of like nature with you, and we bring you good news, that you should turn from these vain things to a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them”* (Paul and Barnabas were speaking to a pagan audience).
 - e. **Romans 4:17** – *“As it is written, “I have made you the father of many nations”—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.”*
 - f. **Colossians 1:16** – *“For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.”*
 - g. **Hebrews 11:3** – *“By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.”*

- h. **Revelation 4:11** – *“Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.”*
2. **The creation of the spiritual universe.** The creation of the entire universe also includes the creation of an unseen, spiritual realm of existence, such as angels, other kinds of heavenly beings, and the place of heaven, where God’s presence is evident.
- a. **Revelation 10:6** – *“Who created heaven and what is in it, the earth and what is in it, and the sea and what is in it”* (cf. Acts 4:24).
 - b. **Nehemiah 9:6** – *“You are the LORD, you alone. You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them; and you preserve all of them; and the host of heaven worships you”* (The description of “hosts” in heaven generally refers to heavenly creatures; angels, seraphim, cherubim, etc.)
 - c. **Colossians 1:16** – *“For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.”*
3. **The direct creation of Adam and Eve.** The Bible teaches that God created Adam and Eve in a special way.
- a. **Genesis 2:7** – *“Then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.”*
 - b. **Genesis 2:21-23** – *“So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, ‘This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.’”*
 - c. **Point:** The special creation of Adam and Eve reveals that even as humans may be like animals in many respects (physical bodies, etc.), we were created in God’s image, the pinnacle of God’s creation.
 - 1.) **Genesis 1:27-28** – *“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it... And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.’”*
 - d. **Problem with the theory of evolution:** According to those who desire to reconcile the biblical story of creation and the scientific theory of evolution, God used the process of evolution to bring human life from a less complex organism after creation to its present form today. However, “the biblical texts concerning human creation are so explicit that it would be very difficult for someone to hold to the complete truthfulness of Scripture and still hold that human beings are the result of a long evolutionary process” (Grudem, 265). The Scripture’s testimony that Eve was created directly from Adam’s rib while Adam slept (Gen. 2:21)

would contradict an evolutionary view of creation since the woman would still need to evolve from another species. However, Eve was created on the spot.

4. **The creation of time.** Another aspect of God's creation is the creation of time (the succession of moments one after another). God exists outside of time and never experiences the passage of time. However, humans live within the bounds of life and death, thus time is a measurement of how many moments have passed by in our experience. Once humans move to the next life, they are no longer within the bounds of time in eternity.
 - a. **Job 36:26** – *“Behold, God is great, and we know him not; the number of his years is unsearchable.”*
 - b. **Psalm 90:2** – *“Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.”*
 - c. **2 Peter 3:8** – *“But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.”*
 - d. **James 4:14** – *“What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes.”*
5. **The work of the Son and of the Holy Spirit in creation.** God the Father was the primary agent in initiating the act of creation, but the Son and Holy Spirit were also active.
 - a. **The Son:** *“All things were made through him, and with him was not anything made that was made”* (John 1:3; cf. Col. 1:16; 1 Cor. 8:6; Heb. 1:2). The Son was the active agent carrying out the plans and directions of the Father.
 - b. **Holy Spirit:** *“The Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters”* (Genesis 1:2; cf. Job 33:4). However, the testimony of how the Holy Spirit is used is scarce. Since the Hebrew word (“ruach”) can also be translated for “wind” or “breath,” the Spirit’s role could have been the active agent breathing life into all of creation’s living things.
6. **Creation is distinct from God yet always dependent on God.** The teaching of Scripture about the relationship between God and creation is unique among the religions of the world. The Bible teaches that God is distinct from his creation. He is not part of it, for he has made it and rules over it. However, there are several philosophies regarding this topic today.
 - a. **Theism** (Transcendence and Immanent): The word “transcendent” means that God is far “above” the creation in this sense that he is greater than the creation and independent of it. The word “immanent” means, “remaining in,” and indicates that God is directly involved in creation.
 - 1.) **Acts 17:25, 28** – *“Nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything...for ‘in him we live and move and have our being’... ‘for we are indeed his offspring.’”*
 - b. **Materialism:** This is the most common philosophy among unbelievers today. It denies the existence of God altogether. Materialism would say that the material universe is all there is. This is an atheistic concept.
 - c. **Pantheism:** The Greek word “pan” means “all” or “every,” and pantheism is the idea that everything, the whole universe, is God, or is part of God. In this view, God does not have a

distinct personality. He is no longer unchanging, because the universe changes. Pantheism is accepted within Buddhism and other eastern religions.

- d. **Dualism:** This is the idea that both God and the material universe have eternally existed side by side. Thus, there are two ultimate forces in the universe, God and matter. Therefore, because both God and evil have apparently always existed side by side, it is no sure bet that God will win over evil in the end, since both are equals. Most “New Age” religion is dualistic.
- e. **Deism:** This is the idea that God created the universe and is far greater than the universe (transcendent), but God does not have any present involvement in the universe. He is like a divine clock-maker: he created the clock, wound it up, and let it go, only to never come back and made adjustments, just letting it run on its own.