



The Biblical Account of Creation

It is worth recalling the magnificent language of the Westminster Confession of Faith (IV, 1&2) dealing with Creation: 'It pleased God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for the manifestation of the glory of his eternal power, wisdom, and goodness, in the beginning, to create, or make of nothing, the world, and all things therein, whether visible or invisible, in the space of six days, and all very good. After God had made all other creatures, he created man, male and female, with reasonable and immortal souls, endued with knowledge, righteousness and true holiness, after his own image, having the law of God written in their hearts, and power to fulfil it, and yet under a possibility of transgressing'.

The first chapter of Genesis is one of the most God-centered chapters in the whole Bible. He is mentioned by name some 32 times in 31 verses and, adding personal pronouns, some 43 times! So that, in the Bible's opening chapter, the Holy Spirit brings us into the presence of GOD and keeps us there! No wonder, therefore, that Genesis 1 is a main focus of Satan's assault, because abandonment of the God-centered truths of this chapter inevitably leads to Satan's triumph. Moreover, if the Holy Spirit's inspiration of Scripture cannot be trusted in the matter of God's work of creation, how can He be trusted later in Scripture when He deals with the vital matters of man's need for salvation? If He cannot be trusted in the first chapter of the Bible, so also (for example) in the great salvation text of John 3:16! And if what he says about the earth in Genesis 1 can be questioned, what confidence can we have of His description of heaven in Revelation 22?

The magnificent opening verse of Genesis 1 is a sublime statement which sweeps away atheism (by asserting God's existence), polytheism (by declaring He is one) and pantheism (by separating Himself from matter). Similarly, since we have every reason to believe that Moses was the human author of the book of Genesis, it is striking and instructive that he did not write the account of creation according to the theories of his own day and age! That is to say, even though he was '*learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians*' (Acts 7: 22), he did not reflect any of these erroneous and absurd views in Genesis chapter one, viz. that there was once a primeval ocean, out of which appeared an egg and from which emerged the sun god, who in turn had four children and their rivalry among themselves led to the creation as we know it! What a blessing that the account of Genesis is not at all like that, but instead like a snow-capped Himalayan peak rising majestically towards heaven. Moses wrote contrary to all the accepted learning of his day. He must therefore have written by divine revelation. Take just one instance as an example: the record states that on the third day of creation, all the waters were gathered into one place to form the world's oceans. How could Moses possibly have known that all the oceans of the world form one interconnected body of water, when all that he could possibly have been acquainted with was a limited access to the Red Sea and the Mediterranean Sea? It must therefore have been shown to him by divine revelation!

Some Specific Observations

The Westminster Confession of Faith is undoubtedly correct when it states, so succinctly, the reason for God's performing the work of creation: '*It pleased God ... for the manifestation of the glory of His eternal power, wisdom, and goodness, in the beginning to create or make of nothing the world*'. As John Calvin aptly put it, the world is designed to be '*the theatre of God's glory*'. This is a constant theme throughout the Bible, often used as the motive for men to worship and honour the true God. For example, '*By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth*' (Ps. 33:6). Paul reminds us that '*the invisible things of Him from*

the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead so that they (men) are without excuse' (Rom. 1:20f). The last book of the Bible recognises God's creation: *'Thou art worthy, O Lord to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created'* (Rev.4:11). In other words, the creation account is woven into the texture of the whole Bible.

We surely need no reminder, either, that the Bible asserts that the work of creation involved each Person of the Trinity, the Father (Gen. 1:1 & Ps. 8): the Son (Heb. 1:2, Jn. 1:3, Col. 1:15-16): and the Holy Spirit (Gen. 1:2). It was creation *ex nihilo* (ie not from pre-existing materials, even though in the later stages of creation, the Creator did use pre-existing materials, eg in the creation of man). It was *fiat* creation (He spoke the universe into existence). There was nothing else outside of God Himself which He did not create. Surely, too, the repeated expression 'and the evening and the morning' at the close of each act of creation most naturally and logically implies six literal twenty-four-hour days of creation, and not long ages of millions of years. And all was 'very good'.

We need no reminder, too, that the creation of man had a distinct place in God's purpose, as evidenced for instance by his being created after everything else (in a world prepared and amply furnished for him), and by deliberation (*'Let us make man in our own image'*) as the image-bearer of God in knowledge, righteousness and holiness, and therefore distinct from the other animal creation entirely, with God's law written upon his heart and with a rational and immortal soul. Moreover, the record clearly states that mankind's origin was from one human pair, confirmed again in Genesis 10 (the genealogy of the nations) and in the apostle Paul's address to the men of Athens in Acts 17:26. This is fundamental to the biblical doctrine of original sin and the doctrine of the resurrection, as stated clearly in Romans 5:12-19 and 1 Corinthians 15:21f.

Dr Henry Morris, in his fine commentary *The Genesis Record* states the fundamental importance of the biblical creation account as follows:

1) Origin of the universe

The Book of Genesis stands alone in accounting for the actual creation of space, mass and time which constitutes our physical universe. Genesis 1:1 is unique in all literature, science, and philosophy. Every other system of cosmogony, whether in ancient religious myths or modern scientific models, starts with eternal matter or energy in some form, from which other entities were supposedly gradually derived by some process. Only the Book of Genesis even attempts to account for the ultimate origin of matter, space, and time; and it does so uniquely in terms of special creation.

2) Origin of order and complexity

Man's universal observation, both in his personal experience and in his formal study of physical and biological systems, is that orderly and complex things tend naturally to decay into disorder and simplicity. Order and complexity never arise spontaneously – they are always generated by a prior cause programmed to produce such order. The Primeval Programmer and His programmed purposes are found only in Genesis.

3) Origin of the solar system

The earth, as well as the sun and moon, and even the planets and all the stars of heaven, were likewise brought into existence by the Creator, as told in Genesis. It is small wonder that modern scientific cosmogonists have been so notably unsuccessful in attempting to devise naturalistic theories of the origin of the universe and the solar system.

4) Origin of the atmosphere and hydrosphere

The earth is uniquely equipped with a great body of liquid water and an extensive blanket of an oxygen-nitrogen gaseous mixture, both of which are necessary for life. These have never 'developed' on other planets, and are accounted for only by special creation.

5) *Origin of life*

How living systems could have come into being from non-living chemicals is, and will undoubtedly continue to be, a total mystery to materialistic philosophers. The marvels of the reproductive process, and the almost-infinite complexity programmed into the genetic systems of plants and animals, are inexplicable except by special creation, at least if the laws of thermodynamics and probability mean anything at all. The account of the creation of '*living creatures*' in Genesis is the only rational explanation.

6) *Origin of man*

Man is the most highly organised and complex entity in the universe, so far as we know, possessing not only innumerable intricate physico-chemical structures, and the marvellous capacities of life and reproduction, but also a nature which contemplates the abstract entities of beauty and love and worship, and which is capable of philosophising about its own meaning. Man's imaginary evolutionary descent from animal ancestors is altogether illusory. The true record of his origin is given only in Genesis.

7) *Origin of marriage*

The remarkably universal and stable institution of marriage and the home, in a monogamous, patriarchal social culture, is likewise described in Genesis as having been ordained by the Creator. Polygamy, infanticide, matriarchy, promiscuity, divorce, abortion, homosexuality, and other corruptions all developed later.

8) *Origin of evil*

Cause-and-effect reasoning accounts for the origin of the concepts of goodness, truth, beauty, love, and such things as fundamental attributes of the Creator Himself. The origin of physical and moral evils in the universe is explained in Genesis as a temporary intrusion into God's perfect world, allowed by Him as a temporary concession to the principle of human freedom and responsibility, and also to manifest Himself as Redeemer as well as Creator.

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