

1. God Created (3Q 2019—The Least of These)

Biblical material: Genesis 1–3, Acts 17:28, Psalm 148, Ps. 24:1, Gen. 4:1–9, Matt. 22:37–39, Rev. 14:7, Prov. 14:31.

Quotes

- If the universe is really completely self-contained, having no boundaries or edge, it would have neither beginning nor end: it would simply be. What place, then, for a creator? *Stephen W. Hawking*
- If the Bible is mistaken in telling us where we came from, how can we trust it to tell us where we're going? *Justin Brown*
- I give thanks to my Creator for this wonderful life where each of us has the opportunity to learn lessons we could not fully comprehend by any other means. *Joseph B. Wirthlin*

Questions

Can we still take the Biblical account of creation seriously? Hasn't science disproved it? Can we harmonize creation and evolution? What difference does it make to our view of God? How do we view our fellow human beings if we don't accept God as Creator and Father? What impact does evolutionary thinking have on our behavior?

Bible summary

Genesis 1-3 provides us with the creation account. Even pagan writers acknowledge the Creator God (Acts 17:28). Psalm 148 is a hymn of praise to God who made everything. "The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it." Psalm 24:1 NIV. The birth of Cain is recorded in Gen. 4:1-9. Jesus summed up the commandments in love to God and love to your neighbor (Matt. 22:37–39). We are called to worship the Creator in Rev. 14:7. We honor God as Creator by showing kindness to the poor. Prov. 14:31.

Comment

The Biblical account of origins is not "just an option." Beliefs about where we come from affect us very deeply. Even now, in conversation, one of the first questions is "Where are you from?" We believe we can know a great deal simply from identifying a person's place of birth and upbringing.

Similarly for us as human beings and how we treat each other. It makes a huge difference whether we believe we are made in the image of God or are just the descendants of primeval slime. So as we study the concepts in Genesis we need to remind ourselves that this is our heritage—that we are God's children, created by him, and not made for this defective and deficient existence but for a world without sin, where righteousness dwells.

Jesus is God, and "without him was not anything made that was made." (John 1:2). Jesus as Creator is not a perspective we often hear, but that is the intent behind John's words in the prologue to his gospel. The parallels between John 1 and Genesis 1 have often been noted—they are deliberate and full of meaning. Yet the most significant point is that Genesis 1 begins with God, unqualified and undebated. John 1 begins with the

Word, similarly affirmed. The question is in both cases, who is God? Who is this Creator God, who is this Jesus the Word who comes to reveal him?

The foundation of faith is the God you believe in. Many of the arguments over Genesis have this as their hidden agenda—for if God is as described, and is as involved with us as he states, then a response from us is essential. No wonder that many either dismiss the God of Genesis because they want no Creator in their lives, or modify this God into the “First Cause” or the “Blind Watchmaker” or some other idea that is far from a Father that seeks a relationship with every one of us.

Our familiarity with the Genesis account can lead us to miss the point. In the description of Creation we see the goodness of God at work. Why is it that after every day’s creation God sees that “it was good” and at the end “it was very good”? God sounds very self-congratulatory, almost proud about his creative work. In counter to this mistaken view, we should see God as identifying the good expression of his goodness, that there is no imperfection and that creation is indeed a representation of who he is.

God’s character is seen in all he does, especially as he lovingly forms matter out of nothing, and then forms every galaxy, star and planet—and us from the dust of the ground. Genesis reveals aspects of the cosmic conflict and helps us understand the issues and consequences. The means and perfection of creation assume even greater importance as we understand the background to God’s incredible creative acts.

Ellen White Comments

The Eden home of our first parents was prepared for them by God himself. When he had furnished it with everything that man could desire, he said: “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him, male and female created he them.”

We have here revealed to us the truth concerning the origin of man. These words prove how false is the invention of Satan, which has been reiterated by man, that the human race has been developed, stage by stage, from the lowest order of animals. This is one of the deceptions by which Satan seeks to lower in the eyes of man God’s great work of creation.

God said, “Let us make man in our image.” He gave to the work of his hands not only a form resembling his own, but a mind capable of comprehending divine things. His understanding, his memory, his imagination,—every faculty of man’s mind,—reflected the image of God. In disposition and heart he was qualified to receive heavenly instruction. He possessed a right understanding, a true knowledge of his Creator, of himself, his duty, his obligations in respect to the law of God. His judgment was uncorrupted, unbiased, and disposed to obedience and affection, regulated according to reason and truth. He was capable of enjoying to the utmost capacity the good gifts of God. Everything upon which he looked was transporting to his senses; every sound was as music in his ears. Yet he was not placed beyond the reach of temptation. He stood as the representative of the human race,—a free moral agent. {YI, August 10, 1899}

Every good thing of earth was placed here by the bountiful hand of God as an expression of His love to man. The poor are His, and the cause of religion is His. The gold and the silver are the Lord's; and He could rain them from heaven if He chose. But instead of this He has made man His steward, entrusting him with means, not to be hoarded, but to be used in benefiting others. {CS 15.2}

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