

## 1. Jesus, Creator of Heaven and Earth (1Q 2013—Origins)

**Biblical material:** Gen. 1:1; Heb. 11:3; Ps. 19:1–3; John 1:1–3, 14; Col. 1:15, 16; John 2:7–11.

### Quotes

- Is the world created or uncreated? —that is the first question. Created, I reply, being visible and tangible and having a body, and therefore sensible; and if sensible, then created; and if created, made by a cause, and the cause is the ineffable father of all things, who had before him an eternal archetype. *Plato*
- 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*
- We are all born as molecules in the heart of a billion stars; molecules that do not understand politics or policies or differences. Over a billion years, we foolish molecules forget who we are, and where we came from. *J. Michael Straczynski, Babylon 5*
- What kind of God can one infer from the sort of phenomena epitomized by the species on Darwin's Galapagos Islands? The evolutionary process is rife with happenstance, contingency, incredible waste, death, pain and horror.... The God of the Galapagos is careless, wasteful, indifferent, almost diabolical. He is certainly not the sort of God to whom anyone would be inclined to pray. *David Hull*
- This is an exceedingly strange development, unexpected by all but the theologians. They have always accepted the word of the Bible: In the beginning God created heaven and earth... [But] for the scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of reason, the story ends like a bad dream. He has scaled the mountains of ignorance; he is about to conquer the highest peak; [and] as he pulls himself over the final rock, he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries. *Robert Jastrow*

### Questions

Why is it important to understand that Jesus is the Creator? How does this impact our view of our origins? What does it matter where we came from? How do we find meaning and purpose in the universe? Is it just a matter of how we feel? How do views of our origins change the way we see issues, particularly spiritual ones?

### Bible summary

The Bible begins at the beginning with God (Gen. 1:1). The manner of creation is summed up in Hebrews 11:3 FBV: "Through our trust in God we understand that the whole universe was created by God's command, that what can be seen was made out of what cannot be seen." David writes that the "heavens declare the glory of God (see Psalm 19:1-3). John 1:1-3 reveals Jesus, the incarnate Word, as being responsible for creation: "In the beginning the Word already was. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. In the beginning he was with God. Everything came into being through him; nothing came into being without him." To this is added, "The Word became human and lived among us, and we saw his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son, full of

grace and truth.” (John 1:14 FBV). This is expanded in Col. 1:15, 16 FBV: “He is the visible picture of the invisible God, who was before all creation, for everything was created through him—in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, empires, rulers, leaders and authorities—everything was created through him and for him.” John 2:7-11 describes Jesus’ first miracle of turning water into wine.

### **Comment**

When it comes to Jesus and creation, the key point is that “nothing came into being without him.” Jesus is the active agent in creation, bringing everything into existence “through the word of his power.”

When it comes to us, 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 the same is true for us as human beings. 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 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 kind of 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.

If the creation of our world was part of God’s answers to the issues in the great controversy, then the belief in God as loving and compassionate is surely the major issue to be decided! As we look at Genesis and understand how this book reflects the truth about the nature and character of God we see how it is helpful to our lives today.

The lesson refers to the anthropic principle. This principle proposes that the universe—the physical place in which we live—has characteristics that appear to indicate that it was deliberately designed for life and our existence. In fact, there are so many specific factors that need to be “just so” that it is now ridiculous to believe that our universe is a random occurrence. The number of “accidents” that would need to occur to form a life-friendly universe is just so immense that no reasonable person could believe this was the process. In the words of John Wheeler, “A life-giving factor lies at the centre of the whole machinery and design of the world.” There is no time to go into this now, but it does seem that this universe is designed for life, and to make our existence possible.

In John 1 the Logos is the creative principle. From the Greek perspective the Logos is the mind of God, while in Hebrew the Logos is the creative word that speaks everything into existence. By using this term to describe the Creator John brings together many elements that come together to sum up many aspects of Jesus as God.

Most important of all is God's nature and character that are revealed in his creative work. It is purposeful and directed, it is "very good." Yet as we see all that is made is with the background of making intelligent life, beings that can relate to God himself. While the incredible power and energy of God displayed in creation is truly awesome in its literal sense, it is God's creative capacity in making life-forms that can think and love and choose that is the ultimate in creation.

That this creative mind should then choose to become one with his creation, to take on humanity and live with us, is beyond anything we could ever conceive. Here we see God as he really is, demonstrating his loving care for his children, wanting to be one with them. Creation cannot be seen in isolation—it is part of that self-giving process that is at the heart of our loving Maker. Limitless in power, he chooses to limit himself, to relate to us in ways we can understand. The Almighty Creator is the one who walks with man and woman in the cool of the day, talking and sharing together.

God as Creator in the form of Jesus is more than a philosophical argument against evolution. It is at the heart of who God is. It is our privilege to call the Almighty Creator God Father, and to accept his words to us when he says, "I call you friends."

### **Ellen White Comments**

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God." John 1:1, 2. Christ, the Word, the only begotten of God, was one with the eternal Father--one in nature, in character, in purpose--the only being that could enter into all the counsels and purposes of God... The Father wrought by His Son in the creation of all heavenly beings. "By Him were all things created... whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him." Colossians 1:16.... The law of love being the foundation of the government of God, the happiness of all intelligent beings depends upon their perfect accord with its great principles of righteousness. God desires from all His creatures the service of love--service that springs from an appreciation of His character. He takes no pleasure in a forced obedience; and to all He grants freedom of will, that they may render Him voluntary service. {PP 34}

Our Creator is Jesus Christ. He is the author of our being. He has created the human structure. He is the author of physical laws, as He is the author of the moral law. {CD 43}

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