

I. The Created Creation:**a. What did God create the universe out of (hint: Ex nihilo)?**

- i. God created the universe out of nothing; nothing but God existed before the universe was created. All things—what Genesis 1:1 calls “the heavens and the earth”—were created by God. John 1:3 affirms this: “All things were made through him.” And in Colossians 1:16 we read, “By him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible.” And as we saw in the previous chapter, all the members of the Trinity were involved in this process. God spoke all of creation into existence—from land and waters to plants and animals (Gen. 1:3–25)—that is, all of creation except for man. Both man and woman were created by God’s very hands and received life from God’s very breath (Gen. 2:7, 22).¹

b. What existed before God created the universe?

- i. nothing but God existed before the universe was created. All things— what Genesis 1:1 calls “the heavens and the earth”—were created by God. John 1:3 affirms this: “All things were made through him.” And in Colossians 1:16 we read, “By him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible.” And as we saw in the previous chapter, all the members of the Trinity were involved in this process.²

c. How did God create everything in the universe except man?

- i. God spoke all of creation into existence—from land and waters to plants and animals (Gen. 1:3–25)—that is, all of creation except for man.³

d. How did God create man?

- i. Both man and woman were created by God’s very hands and received life from God’s very breath (Gen. 2:7, 22). This intimate, special creation is one sign of the special place God designed human beings to have within his creation. In addition, human beings are the only ones that God made “in his own image” (Gen. 1:27). To be in God’s image means to be like God and to represent God. As God’s image, man is the pinnacle of all creation, more like God than any other creature, and the

¹ Wayne A. Grudem, *Christian Beliefs: Twenty Basics Every Christian Should Know* (ed. Elliot Grudem; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 43.

² Wayne A. Grudem, *Christian Beliefs: Twenty Basics Every Christian Should Know* (ed. Elliot Grudem; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 43.

³ Wayne A. Grudem, *Christian Beliefs: Twenty Basics Every Christian Should Know* (ed. Elliot Grudem; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 43.

only one appointed to rule over the rest of creation as God's representative (Gen. 1:28–31).⁴

e. What happens when scientific theories do not see God as the Creator?

- i. Scientific theories that do not see God as the Creator fail to give us the dignity that is given by the biblical account. The Bible teaches that although God did not need to create anything, he chose to create us and chose to create us in his image.⁵

f. When the world realized that Galileo's observations were correct about the earth revolving and rotating around the sun, what was seen to be wrong...the Scriptures or man's interpretations of the Scriptures?

- i. Eventually the whole church recognized that the Bible never teaches that the sun goes around the earth, so they could accept Galileo's observations. We should exercise care, then, in speaking to issues that the Bible does not clearly speak to. And when our observations of the natural world seem to conflict with our understanding of Scripture, we should look again at both, seeking to find where our limited understanding and imperfect knowledge of either could be wrong. Ultimately, a proper understanding of science and a proper understanding of Scripture will not be in conflict.⁶

g. How does God being the Creator create humility and dignity?

- i. Because we are special products of God's creation, this fact should create great humility in us. In addition, because God created the universe from nothing, and because he didn't need to create it, he must have created it for some purpose. Because we are special products of God's creation, this should give us great dignity.⁷
- ii. The Bible is clear: God created the earth and all that is in and on it from nothing. He created man from the dust of the world he created. Before creation, nothing existed but God. Therefore, nothing but God is eternal. Nothing but God can ultimately rule over that which he made. Therefore, nothing but God is worthy of our worship.⁸

⁴ Wayne A. Grudem, *Christian Beliefs: Twenty Basics Every Christian Should Know* (ed. Elliot Grudem; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 43.

⁵ Wayne A. Grudem, *Christian Beliefs: Twenty Basics Every Christian Should Know* (ed. Elliot Grudem; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 44.

⁶ Wayne A. Grudem, *Christian Beliefs: Twenty Basics Every Christian Should Know* (ed. Elliot Grudem; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 44.

⁷ Wayne A. Grudem, *Christian Beliefs: Twenty Basics Every Christian Should Know* (ed. Elliot Grudem; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 44.

⁸ Wayne A. Grudem, *Christian Beliefs: Twenty Basics Every Christian Should Know* (ed. Elliot Grudem; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 44.

II. The Distinct but Dependent Creation:

a. Does God need Creation in any way? Why or Why Not?

- i. i. As Creator, God is distinct from his creation. He is not part of the creation. He is unlike his creation in many ways. He made all things and rules over all things. He is greater than creation and very much independent of it. He doesn't need creation in any way.⁹

b. Since God is not dependent on Creation, is He still involved in it?

- i. But God is also intimately involved in creation. With his very breath he gave life to his very own image. "In his hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of all mankind" (Job 12:10). God himself "gives to all mankind life and breath and everything" for "in him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:25, 28). We are, Paul says, "God's offspring" (Acts 17:29)¹⁰
- ii. God is both involved in and distinct from creation. He is not dependent on creation but creation is dependent on him. Therefore, nothing in creation is worthy of the affection that God deserves. Although God is greater than creation, he did not choose to leave creation to function on its own. Instead, he chose to stay intimately involved with his creation, especially those made in his image. Therefore, he is not so removed from us that he cannot or will not be intimately involved in our lives and our struggles.¹¹

c. How does God being the Creator affect our worship of Him?

- i. God is both involved in and distinct from creation. He is not dependent on creation but creation is dependent on him. Therefore, nothing in creation is worthy of the affection that God deserves.¹²

d. How Does God being the Creator affect our fear and anxiety?

- i. Because God is greater than all creation and involved with all creation, if we hope in God, we have nothing to fear.¹³

III. The Glory Giving Creation:

⁹ Wayne A. Grudem, *Christian Beliefs: Twenty Basics Every Christian Should Know* (ed. Elliot Grudem;Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 45.

¹⁰ Wayne A. Grudem, *Christian Beliefs: Twenty Basics Every Christian Should Know* (ed. Elliot Grudem;Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 45.

¹¹ Wayne A. Grudem, *Christian Beliefs: Twenty Basics Every Christian Should Know* (ed. Elliot Grudem;Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 45.

¹² Wayne A. Grudem, *Christian Beliefs: Twenty Basics Every Christian Should Know* (ed. Elliot Grudem;Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 45.

¹³ Wayne A. Grudem, *Christian Beliefs: Twenty Basics Every Christian Should Know* (ed. Elliot Grudem;Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 45.

a. What is the ultimate purpose of all of Creation?

- i. All of creation was made to give glory to God. “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork” (Ps. 19:1). God says we were also created for his glory (Isa. 43:7). In fact, God’s role as Creator makes him worthy of our glory: “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” (Rev. 4:11).¹⁴

b. What does God’s Creation demonstrate about Him?

- i. God’s creation shows his superior power and wisdom. “It is he who made the earth by his power, who established the world by his wisdom, and by his understanding stretched out the heavens” (Jer. 10:12). Even a brief reflection on the complexity, diversity, and beauty in creation should cause us to praise God for his power, wisdom, and understanding.¹⁵

c. Did God need Creation to give Him any more glory?

- i. God did not need any more glory from creation. All the glory God needs has been forever within the Trinity. Instead, the Bible is clear: God “created all things” and by his will “they existed and were created” (Rev. 4:11). Creation was a totally free act of God. He created the universe to show his greatness, to demonstrate his excellence, and to delight in his work. Therefore, as we take spontaneous delight in God’s creative activities, our creative activities, and the creative activities of others, we are giving glory to God by imitating the delight he takes in his creation.¹⁶

IV. The Good Creation:

a. Is God’s Creation “good” even after the Fall?

- i. God can delight in his creation because it gives him glory. He also delights in it because, as Genesis 1:31 tells us, when God looked over “everything that he had made,” he considered it “very good.” Even though the creation doesn’t always function as it is supposed to because of sin, we should also consider the material creation good. “For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving” (1 Tim. 4:4).¹⁷

b. As Christians how should we view the blessings of God’s Creation?

¹⁴ Wayne A. Grudem, *Christian Beliefs: Twenty Basics Every Christian Should Know* (ed. Elliot Grudem;Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 45.

¹⁵ Wayne A. Grudem, *Christian Beliefs: Twenty Basics Every Christian Should Know* (ed. Elliot Grudem;Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 45-46.

¹⁶ Wayne A. Grudem, *Christian Beliefs: Twenty Basics Every Christian Should Know* (ed. Elliot Grudem;Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 46.

¹⁷ Wayne A. Grudem, *Christian Beliefs: Twenty Basics Every Christian Should Know* (ed. Elliot Grudem;Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 46.

i. Therefore, we are to enjoy the good things God has created for us. Although some things in creation can be used for sinful purposes, their potentially harmful use does not make them evil in all situations. For example, although Paul says “the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils” (1 Tim. 6:10), he also says that God himself “richly provides us with everything to enjoy” (1 Tim. 6:17). Therefore, we should joyfully use the abundant earth God has given us and seek to develop it in a way that brings glory and honor to God’s name.¹⁸

V. Questions for Review and Application

- a. In what ways do God’s acts of creation give us great humility? How do they give us great dignity?

- b. List some of the ways the earth, the animals, and you yourself can give glory to God the Creator.

- c. What does God think about all of his creation? How did his view of the creation change after Adam and Eve sinned? How is God’s view of all his creation different from your view of specific aspects of his creation?

¹⁸ Wayne A. Grudem, *Christian Beliefs: Twenty Basics Every Christian Should Know* (ed. Elliot Grudem; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 46.