

Creation and Providence: Systematic Theology - Semester 1: 2022

DIVINE CREATION

God's creation is defined as his work by his Word and for his glory in creating the universe out of nothing so that its original condition was without spiritual or physical corruption. The following features summarize the main biblical assertions regarding the divine creation of the universe.

The Beginning of the Universe and Time (Gen. 1:1-5; Matt. 19:4, 8; Mark 10:6; John 1:1-2; 17:5; Heb. 1:10)

The Universe Was Created by the Triune God

The triune God is the Creator. God the Father initiated the divine work of creation and governed it (1 Cor. 8:6). As the Father's means, God the Son created the universe, since he is the eternal Word of the Father who spoke all things into being (John 1:3; 1 Cor. 8:6; Col. 1:15-17; Heb. 1:10). The Holy Spirit also participated in the divine work of creating the universe (Gen. 1:2; Job 26:13; 33:4; Ps. 104:30; Isa. 40:12-13). This work was not distributed; rather, each person of the Trinity acted in concert with the other two persons. God the Father is the source; God the Son is the means; and the Holy Spirit is the agent of the acts of creation.

All Creatures Were to Reproduce According to Their Kinds (Gen. 1-11, 12, 21, 24, 25).

No transitional forms (missing links).

All Things Were Created Mature

God created all things mature, and living things were created ready to reproduce, including plant life (Gen. 1:12), animals (v. 20-25), and humans (vv. 26-30). The entire universe was created with all systems in mature operation.

Creation Was Rapid and Out of Nothing (Gen. 1:1-31; 2:7, Ex. 20:11, 31:17; Ps. 33:6, 9; 148:1-6; Isa. 45:18; John 1:3; Acts 4:24; 14:15; 17:24-25; Rom. 4:17; 2 Cor. 4:6; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:2-3; 11:3; 2 Pet. 3:5; Rev. 4:11; 10:6) God created the universe ex nihilo ("out of nothing") in 6 literal 24-hour days. God's Word immediately created, "and it was so."

Man Was Created to Rule the Earth

God created Adam and Eve and commanded them to rule the earth (Gen 1:27-31). God's creation is designed to be enjoyed (1 Tim. 4:4-5; 6:17) and studied (Psalm 111:2).

The Universe Was Created "Very Good" (Genesis 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31)

God created completely and perfectly. Initially, there was no sin, corruption, or death. Scripture teaches that death resulted from sin (Genesis 3; Romans 5:12-21). So theistic and Darwinian evolution by survival of the fittest (which requires decay and death) are Scripturally impossible.

Man Was Created Directly, Climactically, and Specially (Gen. 2:7, 21-23, 24; 1 Cor. 11:8-9)

God created Adam and Eve directly (not evolved) and specially as the climax of the divine work of creation. Scripture teaches the special creation of man & woman, in a specific purposeful way, man from the ground and woman from the man, both in the image of God. When God formed Eve out of Adam, they became the first marriage partners and the pattern for all marriages.

God's Creation Was a Free Act (Eph. 1:11; Rev. 4:11)

God acted freely in creating. The creation is not necessary to the essence of God. The creation is dependent on the sovereign decree of God, so the creation is not in itself a necessity for God to be God.

The Universe Is Distinct from and Dependent on God (Job 12:10; Ps. 104:30; 139:7-10; Isa. 42:5; Jer. 23:24; Acts 17:24-28; Eph. 4:6; Col. 1:15-17; Heb. 1:3; Romans 11:36) God is transcendent & immanent, far above & also involved in His creation. God upholds and sustains it all.

The Purpose of Creation Was to Glorify God (Isa. 43:7; 60:21; 61:3; Ezek. 36:21-22; 39:7; Luke 2:14; Rom. 9:17; 11:36; 1 Cor. 15:28; Eph. 1:5-6, 9, 12, 14; 3:9-10; Col. 1:16) Scripture teaches God's purpose, not random chance, created and governs life & the universe (Jeremiah 10:12; Ps. 139:13; Matt. 6:26, 30; Ps 104:14, 21, 27-30). All things are made by/for Jesus (John 1:3; Colossians 1:16; 1 Cor. 8:6). God created to manifest his glory and creation displays His glory (Psalm 19:1-2). God would not have purposed an ultimate end other than himself, since he is superior to everything outside himself. Therefore, God is worthy of worship as Creator (Revelation 4:11; 10:6; Acts 4:24; 14:15; 17:25-25).

Wrong Views: Materialism (only matter exists), pantheism (everything is god), dualism (good & evil coexist eternally, forces), and deism (God started it but not involved in it).

DIVINE PROVIDENCE

God's preserving his creation, operating in every event in the world, and directing the things in the universe to his appointed end for them.

- God's providence is meticulous, encompassing the grandest and minutest aspects of life: the universe as a whole (Ps. 103:19; Dan. 4:35; Eph. 1:11), the physical realm (Job 37:1-13; Pss. 104:14; 135:6; Matt. 5:45), the animals (Ps. 104:21, 28; Matt. 6:26; 10:29), the nations (Job 12:23; Pss. 22:28; 66:7; Acts 17:26), man's birth and life (1 Sam. 1:19-20; Ps. 139:16; Isa. 45:5; Gal. 1:15-16), man's successes and failures (Ps. 75:6-7; Luke 1:52), things apparently accidental or unimportant (Prov. 16:33; Matt. 10:30), protection of his people (Pss. 4:8; 5:12; 63:8; 121:3; Rom. 8:28), provision for his people (Gen. 22:8, 14; Deut. 8:3; Phil. 4:19), answering prayers (1 Sam. 1:9-19; 2 Chron. 33:13; Ps. 65:2; Matt. 7:7; Luke 18:7-8), and judging the wicked (Ps. 7:12-13; 11:6).
 - God's general providence involves his control of the whole universe (Ps. 103:19; Dan. 2:31-45; Eph. 1:11). His special/specific providence encompasses his control of the details of the universe, including the details of history (Acts 2:23) and the details in the lives of individual people, especially the elect (Eph. 1:3-12).
1. **Divine Preservation:** The ever-active work of God the Son maintains everything he created with all the characteristics and dynamics he gave them. (Job 34:14-15; Ps. 104:29; 2 Pet. 3:7; Hebrews 1:3; Colossians 1:17; Acts 17:28; Nehemiah 9:6). Without this, we would cease to exist, as would the 'laws of nature', but with it, we can trust things to be predictable and repeatable, providing a basis for science.
 2. **Divine Concurrence:** Concurrence is his operation with created things, causing them to act (whether directly or by ordaining through secondary causes) in accord with their inherent properties. God accomplishes all things according to His will (Ephesians 1:11) at all levels of existence.
 - Examples of concurrence permeate the Scriptures... Joseph (Gen. 37:28; Gen. 45:5-8; Gen. 50:20), Moses, Pharaoh (Ex. 4:11-12; 7:3; 8:15, 32; 9:12, 34; 10:20, 27; 11:10; 14:4, 8, 17; Rom. 9:17-18), Job, Satan (Job 1-2), King of Assyria (Ezra 6:22), Judas, Annas, Caiaphas, and Pilate (Acts 2:23; 4:27-28).
 - More examples: Josh. 11:20; Jud. 3:12; 9:23; 11:4; 2 Sam. 24:1; 1 Chr. 31:3; 1 Kings 22:23; Isa. 10:5; 45:7; 63:17; Jonah 1:15; 2:3; Amos 3:6; 4:6-12; 2 Thes. 2:11-12.
 - God's concurrence in all events does not implicate him in sin (James 1:13-14).
 3. **Divine Governance:** God actively and continually rules as King of the universe and he retains and exercises sovereign rule in and over all matters in the universe (Matt. 11:25; Acts 17:24; 1 Tim. 1:17; 6:15; Rev. 1:6; 19:6).
 - God's governance extends over all his works—past, present, and future (Ps. 22-28-29; 103:17-19; Dan. 4:34-35; 1 Tim. 6:15). It is detailed, even over the smallest things (Matt. 10:29-31), chance (Prov. 16:33), good and evil human actions (Phil. 2:13; Acts 14:16).
 - Our human actions are important & we are responsible for them & they have real results & do change the course of events & prayer is one example of that. So we must act. (Acts 18:9-11; 2 Timothy 2:10).

DIVINE MIRACLES

The Bible defines a miracle as God's suspension of the ordinary workings of providence so as to act directly and supernaturally. (Ex. 15:11; Ps. 77:11; Ex. 4:8-9; Num. 14:22; Deut. 4:34; Ps. 145:4, 11-12; 150:2; Deut. 4:34; 6:22; Neh. 9:10; Acts 2:22; Heb. 2:4; Ps. 144:4; John 15:24)

- The laws of nature are not rules outside of God that God is bound to follow. These laws are under God's sovereign control, so he has the right/power to order them as he will or to suspend the natural order and work miracles.

Memory Verse: Yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him. (1 Cor. 8:6)