


Christian Apologetics

Doctrines of Creation

Questions We Face

- Does the Bible teach “Creation out of Nothing”?
 - What do you mean by nothing?
 - What reasons do you have to think the universe had a beginning?
 - What do you mean by God is sovereign?
 - Do humans have free will?
 - How do you reconcile God’s sovereignty and human free will?
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Agenda

- Creatio Ex Nihilo
 - Biblical Support
 - Arguments for
 - Objections to
- God and Creation
 - Sovereignty
 - Human free will
 - Providence
 - Competing views



When we say this we should mean literally nothing and not something that we call nothing. Nothing is not anything. The universe was not created from some uncreated thing, because then that would be something, an uncreated thing! We hold to the idea that the universe was created by God, out of nothing.



Biblical Support

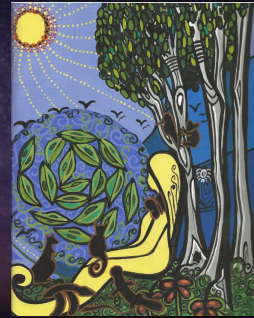
- Genesis 1:1-2a - In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep.”

Doctrines of Creation: Creatio Ex Nihilo

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Australian Aborigine Creation Myth

- The Sun Mother gave the spirits of the earth forms like plants, insects, etc. She gave birth to the Morning Star and the moon who then gave birth to humanity



Doctrines of Creation: Creatio Ex Nihilo

Polynesian Creation Myth

- The world emerged from a shell. The top of the shell became Rangi, or sky, and the bottom Papa, earth. They loved each other and gave birth to a group of gods that assisted in creating the world.



Doctrines of Creation: Creatio Ex Nihilo

Chinese Taoist

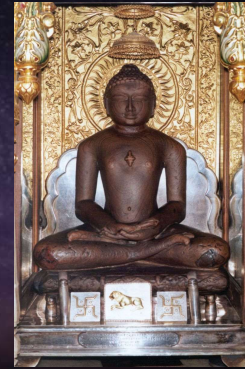
- Pangu emerged from chaos and with a swing of his giant axe separated yin from yang, creating the earth and the sky.
- Eternal universe in chaos in which he ordered.



Doctrines of Creation: Creatio Ex Nihilo

Jainism

- Indian religion that nothing is ever created or destroyed, only changes form.
- Eternal existence of the universe.



Doctrines of Creation: Creatio Ex Nihilo



Biblical Support

- Genesis 1:1-2a - In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep.”

Doctrines of Creation: Creatio Ex Nihilo

You might run into an argument where people discuss some sort of infinite universe and that there was indeed something and what God did, assuming they believe one exists, is rearrange the “initial particles” into what we know to be the heavens and the earth. This is not what the Hebrew tells us. This is a Hebrew idiom describing the entire universe, all of creation, all of physical reality.



Biblical Support

- Genesis 1:1-2a - In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep.”

Doctrines of Creation: Creatio Ex Nihilo

Doesn't this give way to an infinite chaos, without form? The Hebrew description points to something more along the lines of a desert waste or an uninhabitable place. A place of nothing and where life cannot exist. There is no physical reality, nor is there a place where physical reality can live. Genesis continues to show God making creation and forming earth into a place where things can exist and thrive, a universe of order.



Biblical Support

- Isaiah 44:24 – Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, who formed you from the womb: “I am the LORD, who made all things, who alone stretched out the heavens, who spread out the earth by myself...”

Doctrines of Creation: Creatio Ex Nihilo

There was no other. There wasn't an infinite chaos, other gods, a Sun Mother, an eternal shell that gave birth to gods, etc. God alone created the universe.



Biblical Support

- Isaiah 45:18 – For thus says the LORD, who created the heavens (he is God!), who formed the earth and made it (he established it; he did not create it empty, he formed it to be inhabited!)

Doctrines of Creation: Creatio Ex Nihilo

God created the universe.

“He did not create it empty” – This speaks further to idea of “nothing as something” that people try to describe “nothing” as. An empty universe is still possible. Space in absolute vacuum is still something! God created a universe full of things and ordered it into something habitable.



Biblical Support

- Psalm 33:9 – For He spoke, and it came to be; He commanded, and it stood firm.

Doctrines of Creation: Creatio Ex Nihilo

It was through God's Word that all of creation came to be. He commanded its existence and it was so. It stood firm. The universe wasn't just an idea floating around in His mind. He spoke and it became a reality, it appeared, it came into being.



Biblical Support

- Psalm 90:2 – Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

Doctrines of Creation: Creatio Ex Nihilo

The mountains, the earth, the entire world had a before. They may seem like they have lasted forever, but that is not the case. The author distinguishes this with the everlasting nature of God. God is eternal in the past to the future, everlasting to everlasting. Creation had a beginning.

The OT is filled with verse after verse making it clear to us the creation of the universe from nothing. It is done through God's very words. "Let there be..." He speaks all of creation into existence. God is the only uncreated thing and "was" before anything else. He is the "first cause" which is a term we'll get into in a later class. Now for the New Testament.



Biblical Support

- Romans 4:17 – as it is written, “I have made you the father of many nations” – in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.

Doctrines of Creation: Creatio Ex Nihilo

There are many who would try and attack the people of the past to say they had no understanding of “nothing”. This idea of “nothing” is a “new” idea or and that people of that time were so primitive in their thinking they couldn’t possibly understand this concept. We see clearly here, a continuation of doctrine of creation from nothing. God calls into existence the things that do not exist!



Biblical Support

- Revelation 4:11 – “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.”

Doctrines of Creation: Creatio Ex Nihilo

God’s Will was that the universe existed. This is something He wanted and so brought it forth. Many of the ideas you may face is the thought that there is no meaning or purpose behind the universe. It just exists. We are cosmic particles barreling through space with no intent. The Bible makes it clear that it was God’s Will that this universe should be. He created it and did so for a purpose, His glory.

[[[[[Genesis 1:27 – So God created man in his own image, in the image of God He create him; male and female He created them.

1. We are image bearers of the God of all creation. We are created in this manner to reflect God, to display and glorify God.

Isaiah 6:3 – “Holy, holy , holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!”

Psalms 19:1 – The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.

1. The heavens and the earth declare His glory. In our observance of the universe we should come to a place of glorifying God. When we come to

see and understand more of this universe we can reach of place where
God is glorified.]]]]



Biblical Support

- 1 Corinthians 8:6 – yet for us there is one God, the father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one LORD, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.
- John 1:1-3 – In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made.

Doctrines of Creation: Creatio Ex Nihilo

In the OT and the NT there are many examples of creation from nothing. The NT however brings to us a new understanding this doctrine through the introduction of Jesus Christ.

We see our existence comes from God the Father and He is the reason for it why we exist. It is through Jesus Christ that creation came to be. The Word was with God and was God from the very beginning. The universe was spoken into existence through the Word of God. It doesn't say God formed with physical hands the eternal cosmic goo, into a ball, baked it with the sun and thus the earth was formed. Through His very Word, Jesus Christ, the Word that became flesh, all things were made.



Biblical Support

- Colossians 1:16-17 – For by Him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities – all things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

Doctrines of Creation: Creatio Ex Nihilo

There is no thing in all of creation that exists without God



The Big Bang Theory

- This is the leading explanation for how the universe began.
- The universe started from an infinitely dense infinitesimally small singularity 13.7 billion years ago and exploded, rapidly expanding and continues to expand to this day.

Doctrines of Creation: Arguments For Creatio Ex Nihilo

First day of creation in Genesis 1. Let there be light! Sun moon and stars were created on the fourth day, so what is this light? Big Bang scientists current understanding is that the early “soup” of a universe, before form, there could be no visible light. It wouldn't be until 380,000 years after the initial bang that light would finally be visible.



Thermodynamics

- This is the study of the relations between heat, work, temperature, energy, entropy, and the physical properties of matter and radiation.
- The laws of thermodynamics describe how these quantities behave.

Doctrines of Creation: Arguments For Creatio Ex Nihilo

The universe is increasing in its entropy or the amount of usable energy.

In order for something to occur we need to put work in. Gasoline into our car to run the engine. Over time our car will run out of gasoline. At some point there will no longer be enough gasoline to run all the cars. Expand this to the scope of the universe and what we are saying is the universe as a whole is running out of usable energy. The sun will eventually burn out. Every form of energy will eventually run out. This is known as the "Heat Death" of the universe. One of the byproducts of work is heat. When no more work can be done, no more heat can be generated. At this point no life can exist.

What this tells us can be described in what is known as the "arrow of time". Entropy goes in one direction. Cold things, without adding energy, do not become hot. This suggests an initial state or beginning of the universe. It does not go infinitely into the past, but begins at a state of low entropy or maximum potential energy. The universe was super-hot and has been cooling ever since. This also coincides with the Big Bang Theory. The singularity is described as an infinitely dense and insanely hot

singularity. NASA current calculations put the temperature at about 10billion degree Fahrenheit.



Ex Nihilo Nihil Fit

- Latin meaning “out of nothing, nothing comes”
- The objection here is a category error. When we talk about nothing as it relates to *creatio ex nihilo* we are speaking about material objects.
- When speaking of “out of nothing, nothing comes” we are talking about the state of being and causation.

Doctrines of Creation: Objections to Creatio Ex Nihilo

The idea that nothing can come into being uncaused. Being only comes from being. Creation from nothing has a being that causes the universe to come into being, God!



Ex Nihilo

- Most of the time, the primary objection to this argument will come in the form of some “thing” being equated with “nothing”.
- Pronoun \neq Quantifier

Doctrines of Creation: Objections to Creatio Ex Nihilo

“Nothing” is often used as a pronoun in the language of those who oppose *creatio ex nihilo*. They use it linguistically to describe something, when in our discussion, it is to be used as a quantifier term. “All” vs “none” “everything” vs “nothing”. In our usage, it means “not anything.”

Ex Nihilo – “Causing things that don’t exist”

- “Things which don’t exist can’t be caused to ‘do’ anything, since they aren’t there to be influenced by a cause. Therefore, creation from nothing is impossible.”

Doctrines of Creation: Objections to Creatio Ex Nihilo

The error here is this idea of “nothing” is “something”. The nothing described in this example is some “thing” that “doesn’t exist”, made up of some uncreated substratum and thus is thought to be acted upon.



Ex Nihilo – Potentiality and an Agent

- “For a casual event to occur, you would need potentiality and an agent to actualize it.”

Doctrines of Creation: Objections to Creatio Ex Nihilo

Slabs of wood have the potential to be made into a table. A furniture builder is the agent which turns the potentiality of the wood into an actual table.

Would the same apply to the universe? If we take away the wood, then the furniture builder has nothing with which to act upon. There is no potential for a table as there is not wood, even with an agent present.

In this thought, the agent is God and then because there is nothing, there lacks a potential for a universe. Thomas Aquinas points out that in *creatio ex nihilo*, the potentiality of the universe lay in the power of God to create it. God has both the potential and the agent upon which all of creation exists.



Ex Nihilo – Material Cause

- “Everything that begins to exist has a material cause.”

Doctrines of Creation: Objections to Creatio Ex Nihilo

Argument brought forth by philosopher Wes Morriston

When we discuss the Kalam Cosmological Argument, we will dive more into causes, but the argument here is that everything that exists requires a material cause.

The material world exists and all within it comes from or is caused by other material things. A tree doesn't just pop into existence. It comes from a seed which is planted into the ground and watered and bathed in sunlight and grows. All these material things caused the tree to be.

The issue with the argument, philosophically, is that it results in what is known as an infinite regress and thus would require an infinite past. Which came first; the chicken or the egg? In the tree example, we have the tree and the seed before that and the tree that gave that seed before that, and so forth. It is an infinite regress or infinite prior states. Never-ending “what happened before that?” I won't dive into whether an infinite regress is possible, but the issue is that it results in a logical fallacy in that it does not address the issue. We argue there is a beginning and now we are trying to

understand what he FIRST cause is.

The Bible tells us there was a beginning and science, through the Big Bang theory and laws of thermodynamics, shows this to be the most plausible description of the universe. So to accept an infinite regress you would have to also provide arguments against the science.



Proponents who object to *creatio* say *ex nihilo* is easy. From nothing is not an issue. There is no need for a cause, a creator, for things to exist and to come into being from nothing.

The main issue again is that this objection confuses the word “nothing”. What they are really saying is that things exist and can come into being from “something” called “nothing.” Things come into being from something prior to it. “Out of nothing, something comes.”

If this were the case, things would be popping into existence all the time! It’s a wonder that elephants, trees, cars, humans don’t just appear in various stages of development all around us all the time.

You will find most of the arguments are based on the misunderstanding of nothing and so while there are far more objections to be brought forth, if you understand and pay careful attention to the objectors use of nothing, then you should be fine. We have given out definition of understanding and we don’t need to continue to move

forward with theirs when we give OUR defense.



Bible doesn't actually use the word Sovereign. It does however describe God who is. It does so in describing Him as ruler, king, LORD, etc.

I won't go over all these things again, but God's sovereignty is the result of His very nature. When we talked about the Doctrines of God we went over His being infinite(attributes extend eternally), omniscient(all-knowing), omnipotent(all-powerful), omnipresent(always present), transcendent(distinct and independent of creation) and immanent(can be known, seen, grasped, personal).

God's Sovereignty

- Donald Carson, *Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility*
- Summarized God's sovereignty in four main points:
 1. God is Creator, Ruler, and Possessor of all things.
 - a. Genesis 1:1 – In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.
 - b. Psalm 103:19 – The LORD has established His throne in the heavens, and His kingdom rules over all.
 - c. Psalm 24:1 – The earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein.

Doctrines of Creation: God and Creation

God's Sovereignty

2. God is the ultimate personal cause of everything that happens.
 - a. Hebrews 1:3 – He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of His nature, and He upholds the universe by the word of His power.
3. God elects his people. God has chosen a certain people for himself and has called them to himself.
 - a. Ephesians 1:5 – He predestined us for adoption to Himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will.

Doctrines of Creation: God and Creation



God's Sovereignty

4. God is the unacknowledged source of good fortune or success.
 - a. James 1:17 – Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

Doctrines of Creation: God and Creation

Q: Is there any of these summaries on God's sovereignty that someone here would take issue with or deny?

Human Free Will

- Donald Carson, *Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility*
- Summarized human free will in nine main points(+1WLC):
 1. People face a multitude of divine exhortations and commands. God issues commandments and exhorts people to do certain things which presupposes that they have the ability to follow those commands and exhortations.
 - a. E.g. the ten commandments to start

Doctrines of Creation: God and Creation

Human Free Will

2. People are said to obey, believe, and choose God. They can respond to his exhortations and commands.
 - a. John 3:16 – “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.”
3. People also sin and rebel against God. They do not necessarily do what he commands or exhorts them to do. People often sin and rebel against God.
 - a. Isaiah 1:2 – Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for the LORD has spoken: “Children have I reared and brought up, but they have rebelled against me...”

Doctrines of Creation: God and Creation

Human Free Will

4. People's sins are then judged by God. God holds people responsible for their sin and rebellion against Him.
 - a. 2 Corinthians 5:10 – For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

Doctrines of Creation: God and Creation

Human Free Will

5. People are tested by God. God tests people in order to see the genuineness of their faith and the truth of their commitment to Him. So people are tested by God which shows that he treats them as free and responsible moral agents.
 - a. James 1:12 – Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.

Doctrines of Creation: God and Creation

Human Free Will

6. People receive divine rewards. When people do respond in an appropriate way to God's commands and exhortations then God rewards them for their faithfulness.
 - a. Colossians 3:23-24 – Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the LORD and not for men, knowing that from the LORD you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the LORD Christ.
7. The elect are responsible to respond to God's gracious initiative.
 - a. 2 Timothy 1:9 – Who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of His own purpose and grace, which He gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began.

Doctrines of Creation: God and Creation

Human Free Will

8. Prayers are not mere showpieces scripted by God in a kind of dictatorial way. No one who reads the Psalms and the anguish of the prayers in the Psalms can think that these are mere dictations from God and not genuine expressions of human freedom.
 - a. Philippians 4:6 – Do not be anxious about anything, but in prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

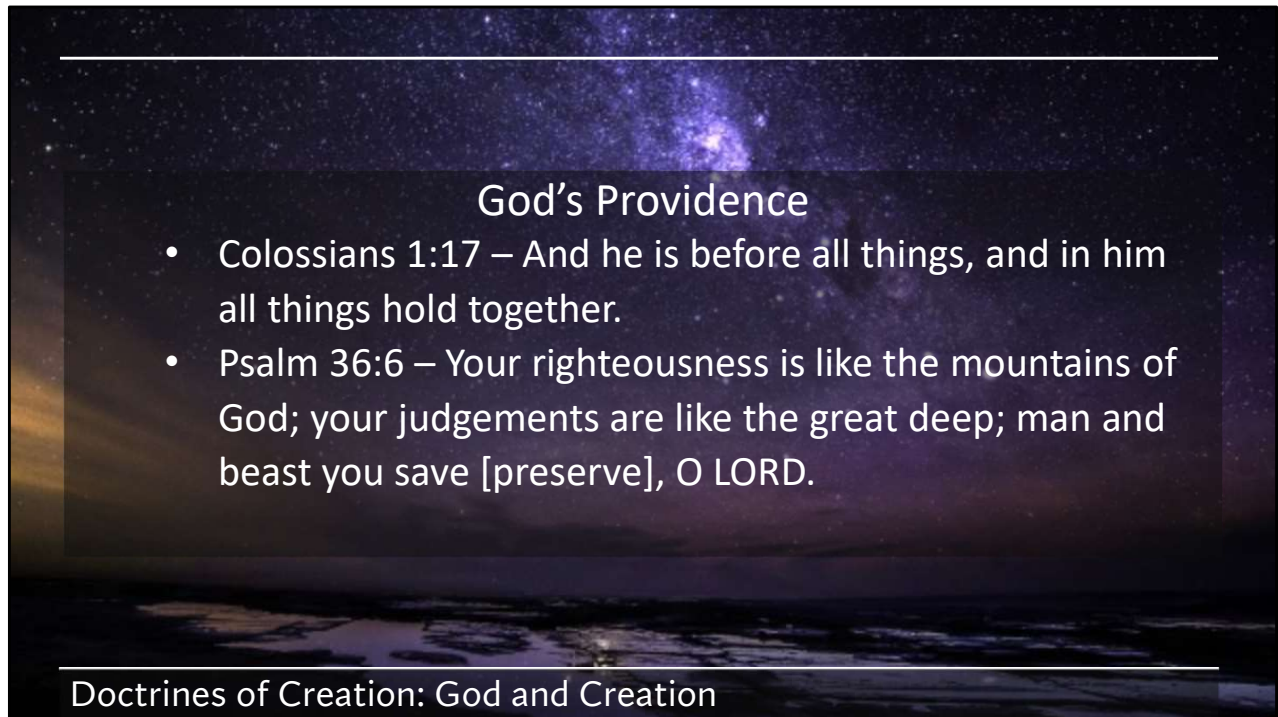
Doctrines of Creation: God and Creation

Human Free Will

9. God literally pleads with sinners to repent and be saved. God wants people to be saved, but he doesn't force them to be saved.
 - a. Luke 5:32 – I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance
10. God's repenting/turning away from a threatened judgement in reaction to a change in human behavior.
 - a. Jeremiah 18: 7-8 – If at any time I declare concerning a nation or a kingdom, that I will pluck up and break down and destroy it, and if that nation, concerning which I have spoken, turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I intended to do to it.

Doctrines of Creation: God and Creation

Q: Is there any of these summaries on free will that someone here would take issue with or deny?



This refers to God's continuing work and involvement in His creation.

God preserves all of creation. It is God who holds all things together. He governs the world and cares for all things.



God's Providence

- Psalm 135:6-7 – Whatever the LORD pleases, He does, in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all the deeps. He it is who makes the clouds rise at the end of the earth, who makes lightning for the rain and brings forth the wind from His storehouses.
- John 5:17 – But Jesus answered them, “My Father is working until now, and I am working.”

Doctrines of Creation: God and Creation

He is actively involved in creation. He is working in our lives and in the lives of those around us. Through Jesus we see this more clearly as the Word became flesh. God became part of His creation in Jesus Christ. As He went about His days here on earth we see things like physically healing people and raising some from the dead and more importantly, dying on the cross for our salvation.



God's Providence

- Romans 5:8 – But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
- 1 Peter 5:6-7 – Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.
- John 14:26 – But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

Doctrines of Creation: God and Creation

He showed his love for us. He cares for you. He provided a helper in the Holy Spirit. For the believer, the Spirit of God indwells. God actively works in our lives to form us into the persons he created and called us to be. He convicts us of our sin, gives us wisdom on our journey, He works in our lives in the most intimate and personal ways. Our god is not “hands-off.”

How does God govern or superintend a world of free creatures while still achieving His ends?

There are three competing views. All affirm God's providence over all of creation. These three views differ in reconciling God's sovereignty and creaturely freedom. Before we dive into those, I want to preface that none of these views are explicitly stated in the Bible. They are systems put together to try and best explain and in turn understand how God can be sovereign and humans have free will. We all affirmed(?) the statements on sovereignty and human free will and so the goal is to try and reconcile the two as best we can.



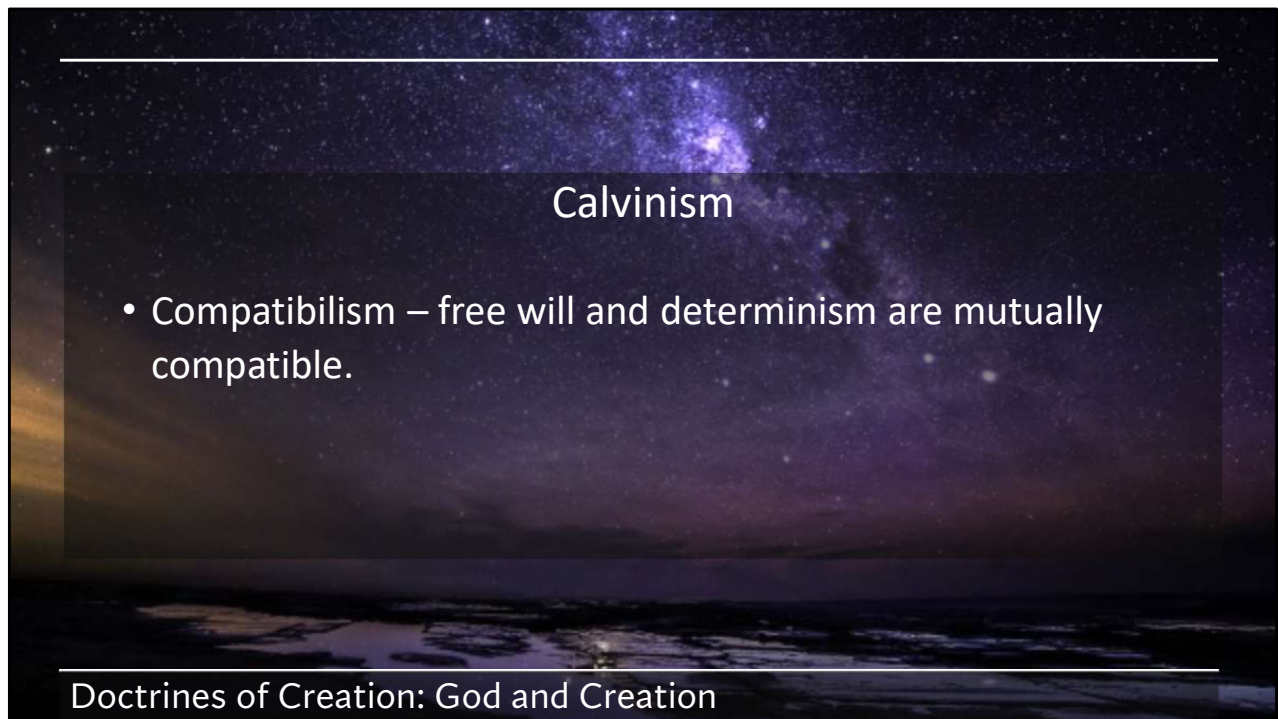
Calvinism

- John Calvin – Swiss-French Protestant Reformer from the 16th century
- Affirm Divine Determinism – This is the belief that God so arranges the affairs of the universe that everything and anything that ever happens is efficaciously orchestrated by God so that it must have happened exactly as it did.

Doctrines of Creation: God and Creation

Efficaciously – in a way that is able to produce the intended result.

Everything will happen exactly as God and God alone wills it. This results in a strong doctrine of God's Sovereignty.



Opposed to this is incompatibilist's views of human freedom that would say that if you're causally determined to do something then you don't really do it freely.

To hold to the Calvinist view you would have to reinterpret human freedom to be voluntarism. God doesn't FORCE you to do something against your will, you do it willingly while also being causally determined by God to do it. You do so voluntarily and you don't have the ability to do anything different.

E.g. WLC – Imagine a terrorist who wants to mow down a crowd of people by driving a van into the crowd thereby killing the people, and so he presses his foot on the accelerator and plows into the crowd killing or maiming many people. Suppose that, in fact, the accelerator was stuck so that he didn't need to press his foot on it at all. It would still have gone into the crowd and kill the people. The causal factors of the automobile made the automobile mow down the people and kill them, and the fact that he was putting his foot on the pedal really made no difference whatsoever. The Calvinist would say this would be an illustration of his doing this voluntarily even though the action was determined. It was causally determined by the malfunction of

the automobile that these people would be mowed down and killed, but the terrorist nevertheless did it voluntarily. He didn't do it against his will.



Arminianism

- Jacobus Arminius – Dutch theologian from the 16th century
- Affirm Libertarian Freedom – This is the belief that people have the ability to do otherwise in free situations and that they are not causally determined by God.

Doctrines of Creation: God and Creation

There is genuine human libertarian freedom to do an act or to refrain from doing that act. You are not determined to do what you do.

The decisions you make are yours and God can hold you responsible.



Arminianism

- Classical Arminian affirms God's providential governance and that evil and sin do not escape Him. He simply permits and or limits them without willing or causing them.

Doctrines of Creation: God and Creation

It is commonly believed that Arminians deny God's sovereignty. This is not the case. They do however see it differently and even then there are differences within the view.

Calvinist will hold to absolute and meticulous control over every aspect of creation. The Classical Arminian holds that God is free to choose to NOT exercise meticulous control and that is itself a sovereign decision. God deciding to do nothing and allowing free creature to do what they will is not an abdication of, His sovereignty, but a decision to exercise it.




Arminianism

- Modern Arminianism in its extreme form hold that God's sovereignty is that He simply has foreknowledge of events to come.

Doctrines of Creation: God and Creation

God knows what people will do and foreordains it. God knows what people will freely choose and declares and ordains that it will be and in this He is sovereign. This doesn't give God control over creation, He is simply a bystander affirming what WILL be.



Molinism

- Luis de Molina – Jesuit counter-Reformer from the 16th century
- Affirm Libertarian Freedom – This is the belief that people have the ability to do otherwise in free situations and that they are not causally determined by God.

Doctrines of Creation: God and Creation

Jesuit Priest/Roman Catholic religious order

Molina says it is not enough that God has simple foreknowledge and then foreordains it. This would be too late for God to be able to plan anything.

Molinism

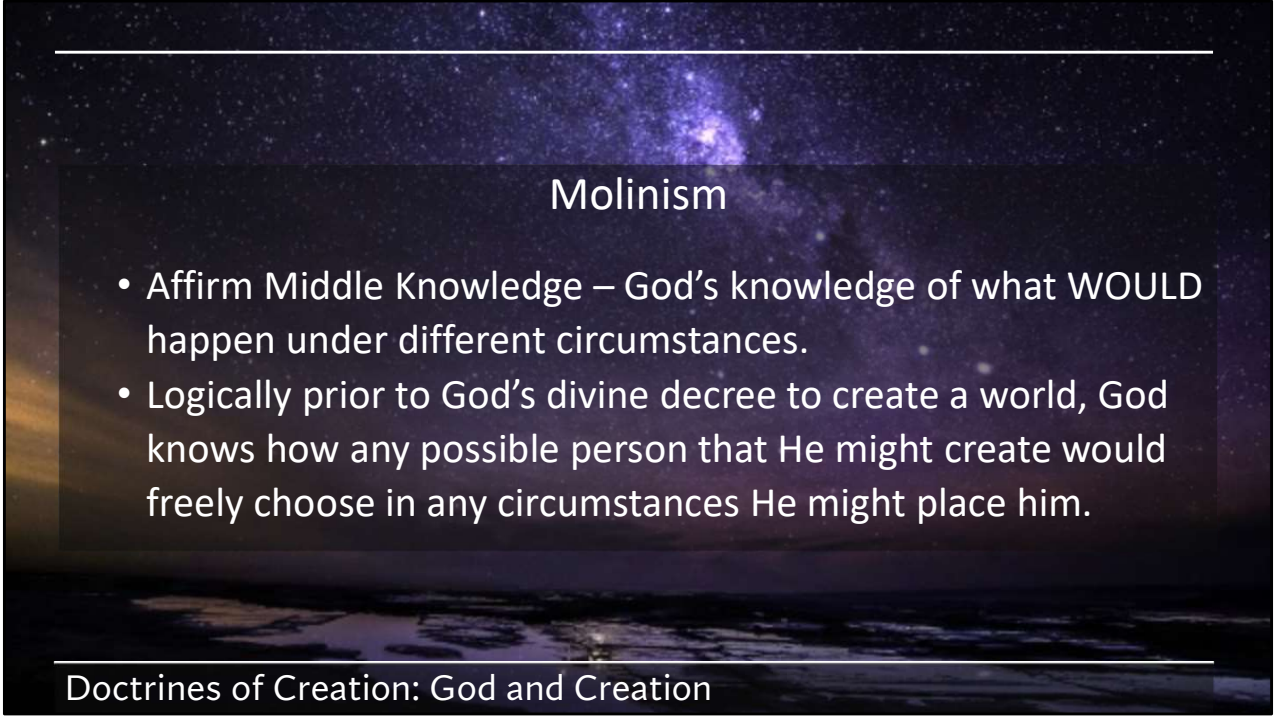
- God's absolute will
 - No human being would ever sin in any situation.
 - God wills that every person always do the right thing

Doctrines of Creation: God and Creation

Molinism

- God's permissive will
 - God's knows that some persons in certain situations would freely choose to do evil, and therefore he permits them to do so.
 - God ruling over human nature and over history is provident and only permits these evils to happen with a view toward achieving his ultimate aims and purposes even through the bad decisions that people make.
 - God is sovereign in that everything is within his control, but he permits certain things to occur that he does not absolutely will, but merely wills permissively.

Doctrines of Creation: God and Creation



Molinism

- Affirm Middle Knowledge – God’s knowledge of what **WOULD** happen under different circumstances.
- Logically prior to God’s divine decree to create a world, God knows how any possible person that He might create would freely choose in any circumstances He might place him.

Doctrines of Creation: God and Creation

God knew logically prior to creating the world that if you had been in Pontius Pilates position what you would have done with Jesus of Nazareth.



Molinism

- Denies Divine Determinism – God decrees to create persons and places them in certain sets of freedom-permitting circumstances

Doctrines of Creation: God and Creation

God knows how you would act in these circumstances and thus knows how the future will unfold. These circumstances are not determined but freedom-permitting.



Molinism

- Tim Stratton – Free Thinking Ministries
 1. If Sally were in non-causally determined circumstance C, Sally would freely choose X.
 2. Sally is in non-causally determined circumstance C.
 3. Sally freely chooses X.
 4. Just because Sally **WOULD** freely choose X in C if she were created in C, and God creates Sally in C knowing that now Sally **WILL** freely choose X in C, the word “freely” does not magically disappear.

Doctrines of Creation: God and Creation

Sally is not determined to do X. She freely chooses to do so and because of God's middle knowledge, **KNOWS** she will. God did not cause her to do X. God may put her in that circumstance, but it is Sally that chooses, freely, to do X. In the Calvinist view, God determines that Sally does X.

Question of the Day

Q: What is the significance of when God's divine decree is issued?

A: A Calvinist may affirm middle knowledge, but the issue lies in the point at which God has this knowledge. A Calvinist would say God has this knowledge logically posterior to His decree to create a world, while a Molinist says God has this knowledge logically prior to His decree to create a world.

The issue with the Calvinist viewpoint, and one of the reasons Arminianism came to be, was that divine determinism coupled with a knowledge logically posterior to His divine decree makes God the author of evil. God knows what a person would do AFTER he has decreed that they will. God is the cause of the evil act committed by the person.

In the Molinist viewpoint, God knows what a person would do prior to His decree, decrees to create the world with a set of circumstances and the person freely chooses to do evil.

In the Molinist view, God's sovereignty remains while allowing for human free will. Since creaturely freedom is maintained, evil is the result of creaturely freedom and

thus God can hold that individual responsible for the sin they commit.

Benediction: Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.(Romans 11:33, 36)

SOURCES

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