

Creation: Creation ex nihilo, Angels, Humanity in God's Image

Topics: Creation ex nihilo; angels; image of God; vocation; gender; dignity.

Key Question: What does it mean to be created in God's image, and how does that shape our purpose and relationships?

Big Idea: To bear God's image is to be given God-bestowed dignity and fitted with personal capacities to know and love him, so that we may represent his rule by faithful stewardship in the world.

Doctrine at a Glance

- **Creation ex nihilo:** God freely creates all things from nothing; creation is good, ordered, and dependent
- **Spiritual creatures:** Angels are created servants and worshipers; demons are fallen angels – creatures, not rivals to God
- **Imago Dei:** Humans uniquely bear God's image: equal dignity, moral accountability, relational capacity, and a vocation of stewardship
- **Purpose:** Creation grounds worship (God as Maker), ethics (human dignity), and mission (faithful dominion/vocation).

Core Claims

- **Creator-Creature Distinction:** God is self-existent; everything else is contingent and sustained by him.
- **Goodness and Order:** The created world is not divine, not random, and not morally neutral. God's handiwork displays his glory.
- **Christ and Creation:** All things are created through the Son and for him; all things hold together in him.
- **Angels:** Created, finite personal spiritual beings who worship God and carry out his purposes.
- **Demons:** Fallen spiritual beings opposed to God; real but limited; subject to God's judgment and providence
- **Humanity:** Males and females are image-bearers with equal dignity; the image entails status (worth), capacity (moral/relational agency), and vocation (stewardship).

Biblical Foundation (Key Texts)

- **Gen 1:26–28** — Image-bearing and dominion as vocation.
- **Ps 8** — Human dignity under God.
- **Col 1:16–17** — All things created through and for Christ.
- **Job 38:4–7** — Creaturely limits before Creator wisdom.
- **Heb 2:5–7** — Human calling and glory in God's economy.

Key Terms

- **Ex nihilo:** creation “out of nothing” by God's free will and word
- **Providential sustaining:** God preserves and governs what he has made (creation is not “wound up” and left alone).
- **Angel:** created spiritual creature; ministering servant and worshiper.
- **Demon:** fallen angel; hostile spiritual creature under divine restraint and destined for judgment.
- **Image of God (imago Dei):** humans as God's appointed representatives—dignity + accountability + stewardship.
- **Complementarity:** Men and women possess equal worth and dignity, but complementary roles in family and church
- **Vocation:** creaturely calling to glorify God through faithful work, stewardship, and love of neighbor.

Common Errors / Missteps

- **Pantheism / “Creation is divine”:** collapses Creator and creature.
- **Deism:** God creates but is functionally absent (denies sustaining providence).
- **Materialism:** creation is accidental and purposeless; dignity becomes negotiable.
- **Angel confusion:** “Angels are dead people” or “guardian angel superstition” replacing biblical sobriety.
- **Dualism:** treating Satan/demons as God's equal opposite (denies creaturely limitation and sovereignty).
- **Imago Dei reductionism:** defining the image as *only* IQ, autonomy, or usefulness (threatens dignity of the vulnerable). **Gender distortions:** denying embodied sexed creaturehood as good, or grounding dignity in sex rather than shared image-bearing.

Confessional Touchpoints

- Apostles' Creed (“Maker of heaven and earth”)
- WCF 4.1–2
- Belgic Confession Articles 12, 14
- Heidelberg Catechism Q. 6