

LESSON IV

Creation: Act of God

INTRODUCTION

The total concept and fact of **creation** in Christianity, comes from the Word of God, the Bible. As God's specially revealed Word to man, complete and authoritative, the full meaning of **creation** can only come therein. We accept the Biblical account of **creation** as it is recorded.

The doctrine of **creation** is of extreme importance to the Christian. All aspects of God take on deeper significance and more important meaning when related to the teaching concerning God the Creator. For **Creation** is the beginning of Divine revelation.

Since the concept of creation is basic to Christian thought, it is important to investigate its meaning. The Christian concept is unique, and different from that of other religions. Only the Christian concept could give a definite idea of God as He really is. It is also basic to a fuller understanding of the meaning of history, redemption and the final consummation.

Creation defined could be said to be that act of God by which in the beginning He made, without the use of pre-existing material, the whole visible and invisible Universe.

CHAPTER I

CREATION IN THE BIBLE

The Bible declares in definite, clear, language that God created the earth. There is but one account of **creation** in the Bible.

We find an extended narrative in the first chapter of the Bible, in Genesis chapter 1. And again in Genesis chapter 2 we find a partial repetition of the account but with a definite emphasis on the **creation** of man and woman. This is not a second account but just an elaboration of one part of **creation**. You can find, as you read these chapters, that they are records of historical facts.

Elsewhere in the Bible, we find affirmation of the account of **creation** as found in Genesis. Many passages emphasize what Genesis 1 and 2 emphasize, the fact that God created the earth; the fact that God is the Author of **Creation**. One such passage is in the book of Nehemiah, in the Old Testament. Nehemiah 9:6 says, "Thou art Jehovah, even thou alone, thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas and all that is in them, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee." Other passages are Isaiah 42:5; Colossians 1:16; Revelation 10:6; etc. And there are numerous such passages, declaring God as Creator of the Universe.

How do we look at the detailed account of Genesis chapter 1? A proper understanding of the purpose of God's Word is important. God's Word, the Bible, was given to reveal Himself to man in order to lead them to redemption. And this redemption is found in Christ, God's Son. If we keep this in mind, then the Bible in general, and Genesis 1 in particular, cannot be looked at as a complete scientific treatise or as a geological thesis.

Genesis chapter 1 records, accurately, God's part in **creation**. We say then that it is a **theocentric** account. Its emphasis is on God, not on a method or in any other detail.

It is also a **geocentric** account. This is, it revolves around **creation** of things pertaining to this earth of ours. After declaring that God created the heavens and the earth (Gen. 1:1), it goes on to dwell on matters pertaining to the earth. This is understandable when we realize the revelation was made for man.

The Genesis account is in **non-scientific language**. This enables all people to understand it. This, however, should not detract from the fact that it is an authentic and valid account.

Considering then that Genesis 1 and 2 is theocentric and geocentric, as well as written in simple terminology, it would not be right to make it read like a scientific paper. But however, we cannot, and will not, see any, scientific contradiction to this account.

The Biblical doctrine of creation is **unique**. No other concept could compare to it that God, out of nothing, created the visible and invisible universe, and created it to His Glory and for spiritual ends.

Further it is an **authoritative** and final doctrine. God revealed the teachings on creation. He revealed what He had done. There can be no other origin for this universe of ours.

CHAPTER II

THE FACT AND CONCEPT OF CREATION

To understand the fact and concept of Christianity, we are not limited to the first two chapters of the Bible. The Bible is full of the work of God in creation, in terms of His omnipotence, His wisdom, His sovereignty and His purposes. The doctrine of creation permeates the Scriptures and we find consistency concerning it throughout the Bible.

There is more than one term used to denote the work of creation. The prominent word in Hebrew is, **Bara**. It is used to signify "create out of nothing" and also to create out of some material, but by God. Other Hebrew terms are **asah** (to make) and **yatsar** (to form). But regardless, the Bible firmly declares God's work in creation. God did create out of nothing, and the Bible also shows that He "fashioned" or "made" further, out of what He created.

Creation is a free act of God: God can be God without man or creation. God does not need worship in order that He may be God, nor does He need to create in order to be loved. The Trinity provides for this, as there is the love between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Hence, creation was definitely a free act of God, not dependent on absolutely anything. To say that creation was a necessary act would be unscriptural.

This also gives us a rebuttal to the teaching of pantheism. If creation was a free act of God, then it shows that God is independent of creation. Creation owes its existence to God. Therefore creation and God cannot be equated. God and creation are not one. Created matter and Deity are not one and the same.

Creation in the beginning was a temporal act of God. Time was not in existence before the creation of the world. The term “in the beginning” translated from the Hebrew word **bereshith**, is itself indefinite. The world was created with time rather in time, as some would say. The scripture only emphasizes that the world did have a beginning, and an eternal God was instrumental in that beginning. Psalm 92:2 & 3, says:

“Before the mountains were brought forth, or even thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God.

Of old didst thou lay the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the work of thy hands.”

God being eternal, all acts of His are in eternity. Creation, however, exists temporarily and terminates in time. Hence the statement, creation is a temporal act of God.

Creation is an act by which something is brought forth out of nothing. This is referred to as ex-nihilo creation, i.e., creation without the use of pre-existing material.

Genesis 1:1 bears record that the world was brought forth out of nothing. No evidence in Genesis 1:1 is found to the contrary. The Hebrew word **barah**, thought not actually meaning created from nothing, does give that idea. When coupled with “in the beginning” then the concept of **ex-nihilo** creation is evident.

But there are other passages in the Scriptures that push the idea of ex-nihilo creation further along. Hebrews 11:3 says, “By faith we understand that the worlds have been framed by the word of God. So that what is seen hath not been made out of things which appear.”

Creation includes both, the visible and the invisible world. The visible world is apparently the universe. The invisible world includes the angels, etc.

Creation was an **act of the Triune God**. The Scriptures teach us this, Genesis 1:1; and others. Even though God the Father is prominent, yet the work of the Son and the Holy Spirit in creation are also referred to often. The most dramatic and significant passage in the Gospels is:

“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.

All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made.” (John 1:1-2)

Creation, in the Christian concept is unique in that it alone gives God the entire glory. Creation itself is to glorify God, the Creator.

Creation was a perfect act of God. The Bible states in Genesis chapter 1, that the creation of the world by God the Creator was a perfect act of God. After every day of creation, the Bible declares that God saw that it was good. And at the end of the sixth day, the Bible says that God saw that it was very good.

Thus, here we find the goodness of God the Creator revealed. Only a perfect God, per se, could create something out of nothing and make it perfect. As God intended it, and as it came from the Creator's hands, the world was perfect. Evil and sin were not part of God's original creation.

When we see God's perfection in creation, then we realize that He can by virtue of His perfection, also make this whole creation acceptable to Him again. Thus, the picture of God redeeming mankind and the world is made much clearer. For we see Him as a God whose original activity at creation was "very good".

CHAPTER III

THEORIES OF CREATION

The Biblical account of creation leaves no doubt concerning two facts of creation. God did create the world, and He did create it out of nothing. There are numerous theories, however, by Christian scholars, who while accepting the Bible's account, differ on how long it took for creation to be completed, what order the world was created in, and how it actually took place.

Many people hold to a literal 24-hour-day theory of creation, ending in six regular days. Others believe in them being revelatory days, that is, creation revealed to man in six days. Another theory is the Day-Age view, viz., each day of creation being a period or age of history. Other views are the Framework Hypothesis theory and the Gap Theory.

Each of the above mentioned theories do not really contradict the Genesis account. If we interpret a "day" in Genesis to be of 24 hours duration, or to be an "age" in history, the fact still remains that God created the world.

But there are theories of creation that do contradict God's Word. But there theories are just what they say they are – theories. They cannot substantiate themselves and so do not stand up to honest scientific evaluation.

Such a theory is the theory of **spontaneous evolution**. This means that life and matter came into being without a Creator – without God. The only possible way this could happen is by sheer chance. But nothing in this Universe happens by mere chance. So why attribute the origin of life itself to chance? We see in creation the originator of this universe, the hand of an

Ultimate Cause, and through further revelation we see this Ultimate Cause as a loving, personal God. Chance, as a theory of creation, is abhorrent to common sense. The Bible does not indicate, at all, the possibility of chance as a means of the world's existence. On the other hand, the first and second laws of thermodynamics seem more in favour of a "created" universe than a "chance" universe. The Law of Entropy (2nd law of thermodynamics) says that energy will eventually dissipate. So we can show that all matter can eventually run down, and that if there is going to be an end, there must have been a beginning. The Bible says that God created that beginning for the Universe.

Another much discussed theory is the **theory of evolution**. The complete theory is complex but the basis is of life "evolving" from a lesser form to a higher form ending in man. This appears alright, but there are still vital questions. Who created the original "least" form of life? Did God create separate life-forms? What about man?

The Bible declares that God controlled every part of creation. The evolutionary process, if it eliminates God's guiding hand, is in contradiction to God's Word. And the climax of creation, in man, is given in the Bible as a "creation" in the image of God – a distinct, separate life-form. "Evolution" contradicts this. There is no honest, physical evidence to show that man evolved from a lesser form or was ever lesser in mental, physical or spiritual intelligence. The finding of "Neanderthal" type of men remain speculative theories, and indeed there have been hoaxes as well. There are numerous scientists who disagree with the theory of man's naturalistic evolution. And of course, today, it is clearly proven that all life reproduces after its own kind.

There are also non-Christian theories that contradict God's Word. The **theory of dualism** states, basically, that matter and God are co-eternal and self-existent. We have seen that matter is created and no eternal; that God alone is eternal. Also, we have seen that God created freely, and He Himself is not dependent on matter. He created and orders the Universe but His Being is independent of matter.

The **emanation theory** also contradicts God's Word. The theory states that matter emanated from God and therefore God and matter are essentially one. What was said to refute dualism can also apply here. God is independent of matter, though He orders it.

CONCLUSION

The Bible gives us a clear picture of creation focusing on the Who of creation – God. The Bible account emphasizes that creation was an act of God. God alone is Eternal and everything created is dependent on God.

Creation reveals God to man in terms of His Eternal Being and His Majesty and Glory. We need the further revelation, however, to know Him as a Personal Living God. We find this revelation in Christ and His Word.

Science and the Bible have no quarrel. Science daily reveals more and more of God's infinite wisdom and power. Wherever there appear to be contradictions, we find just unproven theories and speculations. Also, the Bible's purpose is to reveal God to man and lead him to redemption in Christ. It is not a text-book on science, though it harmonizes with science.

A dualistic, pantheistic view of creation is not a Christian view. It is not in accordance with God's Word. Similarly, a chance, atheistic view is not Christian. Evolution without God is also not Christian. Further, the stated, generally accepted theory of evolution, which places man as "evolved animal" contradicts God's Word and is not Christian.

We believe that God created the world according to His plan and design; that He did it in a manner of order and progression. He created distinct life-forms and made man in His own image. Man is a product of creation – God's Creation. And God knows, and He alone does, all the mysteries associated with it.

CHAPTER II

THE FACT AND CONCEPT OF CREATION

1. Many people talk about exnihilo creation. What does this mean?
2. Give some proof from the Bible that the Triune God created the world.
3. Somebody tells you that God and His creation are really one. Explain how you would tell him that creation was a free act of God.

