

Systematic Theology 1 (TH3)

Doctrines of Creation & Providence

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Systematic Theology 1 (TH3)

1. Introduction to Systematic Theology
2. Doctrine of the Word of God
3. Doctrine of God
4. Doctrines of Creation and Providence
5. Doctrines of the “Supernatural” –
Miracles, Prayer, Angels and Demons
6. Doctrine of Christ
7. Doctrine of the Holy Spirit; Final Exam

The Doctrine of Creation

- The universe was created by God from nothing (ex nihilo)

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ² Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

Genesis 1:1-2

The Doctrine of Creation

➤ Humanity was created by God in His image.

Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”

²⁷ So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

²⁸ God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

Genesis 1:26-28

The Doctrine of Creation

- **Humanity was created by God in His image.**

When God created mankind, he made them in the likeness of God. ² He created them male and female and blessed them. And he named them “Mankind” when they were created.

Genesis 5:1-2

- **Three ways in which we are made *imago dei*:**
- **Substantive** – there are similar characteristics between the human race and God – the “communicable attributes.”
- **Relational** – that our ability to establish and maintain complex and intricate relationships makes us like God.
- **Functional** – that the image of God imprinted on us resides in function rather than in form or relationship, this function being primarily our task of ruling over earth.

The Doctrine of Creation

- **Humanity was created by God in His image.**

Additional ways in which we are *imago dei*:

- **Personality** – we have individuality, knowledge, feelings (including religious feelings) and a will.
- **Morality** – we have an understanding of right and wrong and the ability to make moral decisions.
- **Spirituality** – like all created beings we have a body, but unlike other creatures, we also have a spirit that can be aware of God and commune with Him.
- **The 3-Part Construction of Humanity**
 1. Soul (*nephesh*)
 2. Spirit (*ruach*)
 3. Body

The Doctrine of Creation

➤ **Four views on the source of the universe.**

- 1. The universe had no origin – it simply has always been; matter has always existed.**
- 2. Everything came from a personal something, which was good.**
- 3. Everything came from a personal something, which was bad.**
- 4. There is and always has been a dualism.**

The Doctrine of Creation

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The Doctrine of Creation

➤ **TWO views on the source of the universe.**

1. The universe had no origin – it simply has always been; matter has always existed.

OR...

2. Everything came from a personal something, which was good.

The Doctrine of Creation

If the universe had no origin – if it simply has always been; if matter has always existed...

1. How did personality, which exists in us (thus allowing us to ask these questions), come to exist?
2. Matter, as we know it, is unquestionably organized and appears to have a purpose. From where did this organization and purpose come?
3. If there is organization and purpose, does that not demand an Organizer and a Purposer?

The Doctrine of Creation

That leaves us with only one view on the source of the universe:

That everything came from a personal something, and that something is a Being who is good.

The Doctrine of Creation

“In the Beginning...”

1. God was there at the start, when nothing else existed.
2. Creation occurred as an orderly unfolding of the mind and purposes of God.
3. God introduced a moral pronouncement on His creation: *“And God saw that it was good.”*
4. If God pronounced His creation to be good, then we must find it good as well.

The Doctrine of Creation

Our necessary response to God's creation:

- 1. We must be *thankful* for the world God has made and praise Him for it.**
- 2. We should *delight* in creation, appreciating and enjoying what we see.**
- 3. We should demonstrate responsibility toward the creation and nature, caring for it and using it in a proper way.**
- 4. We should allow the created world to lead us to trust in the God who made it.**

The Doctrine of Creation

➤ Other critical aspects of the Christian Doctrine of Creation:

1. Creation is distinct from God. (not pantheism or panentheism)
2. While creation is distinct from God, it was created by God and is dependent on Him. (not materialism, dualism or deism)
3. God did not and does not NEED creation or creatures; He created and sustains creation purely for His own glory and pleasure.
4. God's created world, though fallen, is *still* good. (not gnosticism or asceticism)
5. Ultimately, when all things are known, there will be "No Final Conflict" between how the created world is understood by faith & by science.

The Doctrine of Creation

- With regard to the age of the earth, creation versus evolution, etc.:
- 1. We do not know and cannot know for certain. To demand more than this is almost always simply pride talking. As long as we have faith that God is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe we are good, even if we don't have more details of how or when He did it.

Therefore, with respect to the length of days in Genesis 1, the possibility must be left open that God has chosen not to give us enough information to come to a clear decision on this question, and the real test of faithfulness to him must be the degree to which we can act charitably towards those who in good conscience and full belief in God's Word hold to a different position on the matter.” Wayne Grudem

The Doctrine of Providence

Providence is the way in which God continues to control and be involved in the universe he created.

The Doctrine of Providence insists that God has not abandoned the world he created, but continues to be active in it.