

Creation

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Creation

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Contents

The Nature of Creation: Revelation from God	7
The Purpose of Creation: Displaying God's Glory	7
The Purpose of Humanity: Knowing God's Glory	8
A Personal and Global Education in Theology	8
All Things Created by Christ and for Christ	9
The Threat of Naturalism	10
Genesis 1:1: The Foundation	14
The Unfolding of Creation Week: Genesis 1	14
The Climax of Creation: The Image of God	18
The Goodness of God in the Goodness of Creation	19
The Sabbath Rest	20
The Special Creation of Humans: The Details of Genesis 2	21
A Glorious yet Needy Earth Waits for Its Caretaker and Ruler	21
The First Man Created a Living Creature	22
The Special Commands of God	22
The Creation of Eve and Marriage	23
A Tragic Fall for Creation	24
The New Creation	25
Applications of the Doctrine of Creation	25
The Gospel Coalition	29

There are two categories into which everything in the universe fits, and there is an infinite distance between the two: the Creator and creation. God alone had no beginning; he is self-existent and depends on nothing for his continued existence. Everything else in the universe was created by God and for God. In this booklet, we have the delightful work of considering the doctrine of creation, understanding its significance, and applying its truths to our lives.

The Nature of Creation: Revelation from God

All the information we have concerning the creation of the universe comes by revelation from God. The two great sources of this knowledge are the physical creation around us and the Scripture, which describes it accurately to us. From the very beginning, God crafted a universe that reveals his existence and true nature so that we would know him and worship him. Romans 1:20 asserts, “Since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made” (NIV).

The Purpose of Creation: Displaying God’s Glory

God made the universe to display his glory. It was certainly not for any lack on God’s part, as though God needed anything, but rather for a desire to give generously from the greatness of his being. The twenty-four elders who surround the throne in the book of Revelation are fulfilling the purpose of creation when they use it for the praise of God’s glory: “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” (Rev. 4:11).

As God created the universe, he poured his glory into every atom and complex system, whether in the cosmos or in the ecosphere. As Psalm 19:1 puts it, “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.” The creation is not waiting to display the glory of God; it already does. The seraphim flying around the Lord’s

Andrew M. Davis

throne proclaim this constantly: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!” (Isa. 6:3).

The Purpose of Humanity: Knowing God’s Glory

A prophecy by Habakkuk declares the purpose of humanity (and of redemptive history): “The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea” (Hab. 2:14). Since the earth already displays the glory of God, all that is left is for the earth to be filled with the *knowledge* of that glory. This task cannot be performed by the earth’s atmosphere, the majestic cedars of Lebanon, the towering Himalayas of Nepal, soaring eagles, or powerful elks. Though all these created beings *display* the glory of God, they cannot *know* the glory of God. That vital task of worship was assigned to the human race, created in the image of God to search out both the obvious and hidden displays of God’s glory in every aspect of creation.

But the immeasurable tragedy of Adam’s rebellion in the garden of Eden is that the human heart, which should have delighted in God the creator, worshiped the creation instead (Rom 1:25). So while the human race has been fruitful and multiplied and in a large measure filled the earth with the image of God, the Lord’s original intention—an earth filled with the knowledge of his glory—still awaits fulfillment.

There is only one force in the universe with the power to transform the idolatrous hearts of humans into those that will know the glory of the Lord as displayed in creation: the gospel of Jesus Christ. By this gospel our hearts of stone are transformed, made alive to the glory of God shining all around us. The fulfillment of this grand overarching promise awaits the new heaven and new earth, when the glory of God will illuminate every created thing and the righteous themselves will “shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father” (Matt. 13:43).

A Personal and Global Education in Theology

Our education in theology—God’s existence and attributes—began from the moment we were conceived in our mother’s womb and continued day by day long before we learned language. We were educated by the sound of our mother’s heartbeat, the sensation of warmth, the tastes in our mouth, the blinding flash of light at birth, the brilliance of colors, and the aromas of our bassinet and clothes. David says in Psalm 22:9, “Yet You are He who brought me forth from the womb; You made me