

Biblical Theology by Dr. Chuck Baynard

Lesson 9 (HCLD 3)¹

Preparation: Begin and end each study time with prayer. Pay particular attention to the background reading and pray over each passage asking God to reveal Himself to you.

Background Reading: Read all the Scripture verses in footnote # 1 & 2

Vocabulary: Creation, Day-Age Theory, Gap Theory, Literal Six-Day Creation

Question: What is the work of creation?

Answer: The work of creation is that wherein God did in the beginning, by the word of his power, make of nothing the world, and all things therein, for himself, within the space of six days, and all very good.[a]²

Surely the wisdom of God shown in the works of the Westminster Assembly is only over-shadowed by that of His own eternal glory and wisdom. Again they have chosen two short proof-texts to boldly declare one of the greatest truths of the Bible. I was surprised not to see one reference to Genesis, nor an attempt to prove the length of the days of creation. Instead they moved to the one real issue before us; God said it, now you choose whom to believe, God or man! The reference to Genesis one being more of a background reading for context and understanding than proof text. It is only by faith that the truth of God's word will be revealed by the only source of light to understand what God has said, the Holy Spirit. The appeal then to Hebrews 11:8 brings the focus concerning creation of all things to the correct place, faith.

The holy boldness of the statement before us drips with the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Though not Scripture and thus not part of the divine inspiration, this statement also rests on the illumination of the Holy Spirit for understanding and application. As one of the foundational documents of the Presbyterian church, we might have thought such a clear and concise statement so early in our history would have stilled the tongues of adversaries,

¹ Heidelberg Catechism Q6: Did God create man thus, wicked and perverse?

A7: No,[a] but God created man good and after His own image,[b] that is, in righteousness and true holiness; that he might rightly know God his Creator, heartily love Him, and live with Him in eternal blessedness, to praise and glorify Him.[c]

[a] Gen. 1:31

[b] Gen. 1:26-27

[c] II Cor. 3:18; Col. 3:10; Eph. 4:24

² [a] By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.(Hebrews 11:8 NKJV)
The LORD has made all for Himself, Yes, even the wicked for the day of doom. (Proverbs 16:4 NKJV)
Gen. chapter 1

and have protected the truth of our doctrine through the so-called age of enlightenment.

Alas this has not been the case, and how one interprets the creation accounts is not a measure of orthodoxy within the Reformed church. Today only those who are considered to be fundamentalists cling to six-day creation, and if necessary, take that title flung out as a most derogatory tag by those who by their own profession of some other view are actually the ones who corrupt the word of God. Can a Christian believe in anything except six-day creation? Absolutely, godly men from all generations have held to gross error in places. Peter's continuing conflict with Paul is a prime example of this from the apostle's whom God used to found the church. That however does not make the error acceptable. Reformed churches should have stood firm and declared the six-day creation of Scripture the standard. Every other view professed, even if allowed, should be treated as an exception³ to the standards

Alas this has not been the case, and how one interprets the creation accounts is not a measure of orthodoxy within the Reformed church. Today only fundamentalists cling to the six-day creation, and that title flung out as a most derogative tag by those who would corrupt the word of God. Can a Christian believe in anything except six-day creation? Absolutely, godly men from all generations have held to gross error in places. Peter's continuing conflict with Paul is a prime example of this from the apostle's whom God used to found the church. That however does not make the error acceptable. The church should have stood firm and declared the six-day creation of Scripture the standard and all else an exception to the standards.

This technique was perfectly executed by Satan in the beginning to undermine the authority of Scripture (God's voice) and introduce death into the world. Whereas, we find Satan saying to Eve, ". . . you shall not surely die . . ." (Questions 3, 4, and 5 deal with the Scripture along with the first chapter of the Confession itself.) We have not understood nor accepted this fact, the Bible is God's word. I marvel as I watch men who supposedly *subscribed* (see footnote concerning exception) to the Westminster Confession making no exceptions, then stand and espouse the old earth theory, or try and compromise God's word with the intermingling of man's understanding and science, so-called. Despite the efforts of *scholars* to prove otherwise, that is the issue here, to undermine God's word by finding more than divine truth reveals, or suggesting that *two interpretations* may be acceptable. The word of God is clear, and all the logic in the universe cannot disprove one dot of it. Science is also a part of God's creation⁴. Where is faith for those who would diminish the word of God, by applying it through the filter of man's knowledge? Yet, "without faith we cannot please God."⁵ What glory to God if all would

³ Exception: In confessional churches all officers subscribe to the confession of the church as being in accord with the correct teaching of the Bible. If a man disagrees with the confessional standard he gives written report of the exception and the church decides if it is acceptable for him to hold this belief and hold office in the church. The church can note the exception with no action, note the exception with a command that he not teach his belief concerning this issue in the church, or the church can decide this places the man outside the orthodox beliefs of the church and ineligible for office. This is error, either a person agrees with the confessional standards, or he needs to be outside that church body. This is a harsh stance and is not acceptable to many, thus the rules concerning exceptions.

⁴ See questions 12-14 of the Westminster Larger Catechism concerning the decrees of God.

⁵ Heb. 11:6

have the love and reverence for this precious word of truth the Puritans owned. The treasure of God's word was entrusted to mortal man. Man tosses this divine word around as if it were but a filthy rag. This describes too many within the church today. This wasn't true of the men who God spoke to in the record of the Holy Writ. How often do we hear the prophets proclaim, "the burden of the word of God."⁶ God has placed tremendous responsibility on those who have received this precious gift, but as in the garden, the first petal of the TULIP rises to rule from within mankind, and *Total Depravity*⁷ raises her head, even in the church, the body of Christ.

Why is this so? Because the church wears a human face, and all the baggage of this age enters the sanctuary door with the creature. Man rejects this because in the creation story of the whole Bible, he learns He isn't the center of attention, God is. It is the rare mortal who can live his life in subjection, even to God, without the rebellious nature of the curse rising to the surface to dull his vision and cloud his speech. "The Lord hath made all things for himself; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil" (Prov. 16:4). Man tears down this truth in the pretense of defending the honor of God. "God is holy and is not the author of sin, thereby didn't create evil . . ." How their voices deepen, how the rainbow colors of stained glass drip from their words. God created all for His own glory declares Scripture. I stand in amazement at the inability of the doctors of the church to understand this simple word all. Cannot all see that God is perfect in all things, even His wrath and that evil is necessary to show the glory of His judgment and wrath? The liberal wants us to get all teary eyed because God has not chosen some, and debate that a God of love could do such. Aw, but the second petal⁸ of the TULIP sets the doctrine solidly within the word of God, even as many turn from the great truth of the Reformed church out of supposed godly compassion. This would be well and good if they simply packed their bags and left, but no; they attack God's word and profane the body of Christ with this drivel. For they will reform the church, after all is not the motto of the Reformed church, "Reformed and always Reforming?" Yes friend, but we Reform the church to Scripture and never the reverse. You have failed Bible 101, return to Chapter one of the Westminster Confession of Faith and begin again.

The truth of Scripture that the Divines have shown us here is simple and direct. God created everything (ALL) out of nothing. He didn't reshape or reuse existing material. He did so for His own glory. God created everything in the space six literal 24 hour days, by the power of His own Word. In the New Testament we find the Word is Jesus Christ, and thus has God revealed the Trinity in that God, Word, and Spirit were present in the creation. Some would claim that the last words in this answer ". . . and all very good."

⁶ Zec. 9:1 The word in this sense is not burden as if of labor, but one of responsibility to rightly handle this great grace in having the word of God entrusted to a man for its transmission to all mankind. Man has never desired the direction of God's word and God's messengers have universally been scorned and in the end killed because of this burden of the word of God.

⁷ Total depravity doesn't mean man is as corrupt as he can be, but is depraved in all of his faculties, body, mind, and soul. In this condition man cannot save himself.

⁸ Unconditional Election: For no purpose other than His own glory, in counsel with none but Himself, God chose some to eternal salvation in Jesus Christ, before the foundation of the world.

means God didn't create evil. God created it all for His own glory. By faith accept this fact; God spoke and the rest of the story is revealed in the Bible for all of eternity. My favorite bumper sticker of all time says "The Big Bang Theory: God spoke and bang it happened!"

The theological wars about did God create evil are silly. God created ALL things. Satan has never been in control of anything, God will not share His sovereignty nor glory. That He created all very good outstanding, He also created it with the foreknowledge some would fall. This has been called God's permissive will. The late Dr. John Elliott preferred the term "God's directive will." God created it all for His own purpose and *directs* all that happens. His purpose needed the dark side for the light of His countenance to be perfected even as He brought glory to Himself in the perfection of His judgment for the fallen. This does not make God the author of sin, He is not. Nonetheless, He *permitted* it to happen, for He is sovereign over His creation. Yes God is sovereign and could have prevented sin or evil. This however would have defeated the purpose of creation to glorify God. If God had not created angels and men with the ability to fall, there would be no glory to God in the creation. The created, angels and men of their own volition entered into disobedience and sin. God is not the creator or author of sin, God permitted it to happen for His own glory. That is not complicated and there is no room for debate.

The just live by faith is found three times in the Bible encompassing both the Old and New Testaments. Scripture says, "without faith you cannot please Him." Some things are beyond our finite minds, but that God is sovereign we can understand. That He gives us the gift of faith He requires of us shows the glory and perfection of His love. Likewise, His perfect judgment brings glory to His perfection in wrath and judgment and in this perfect demonstration of His love reveals "God is Love" as spoken of by John. This interlocking of complete "circles" within the revelation of God from beginning to end, in an intricate pattern creating the most infinite whole, human minds cannot begin to conceive, is shown in these short, but decisive statements of the Larger Catechism.

The Frame Work Theory: This is a fairly complex theological construction that allows vast amounts of time to be used by God in the creation and thus denies it was all done in six days as human beings understand them to be. The Genesis account becomes the frame around which creation is understood (frame work) and different part of Genesis 1-2 is considered as different types of literature, narrative, poetry, etc. This has found fairly wide acceptance in many academic circles and reformed churches. This theologian says bunk! This is not biblical and is the twisting of the word of God to suit the mind of man.

The Gap Theory. This is an older construction that says there is a gap in time between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2. In this Gap, God reordered the corruption caused by Satan after verse one. Thus God created all good in verse one, and the fall of Satan causes chaos to reign that requires God to recreate it in verse two. The amount of time between verse one and two is unknown and the old age of earth is possible. This has been discarded by most and was never held widely in the Reformed churches.

Day-Age Theory. Not as complex but similar to the frame-work theory. This theory simply says that with God a day is a thousand years and a thousand years is as a day so we can't know what God meant when He said day. Thus, the earth can be old as science claims and creation not be harmed. The claim that this doesn't concede anything to evolution allows some to agree this is a possible explanation and isn't heresy. Wrong again! It corrupts the understanding of the Sabbath and corrupts the understanding of the Fourth Commandment. The Hebrew word used in Genesis cannot be found anywhere in the Bible or other Hebrew literature to mean anything but a twenty-four-hour day. Same as the frame work theory, it twists the Scripture to fit the mind of the created.

Literal Six day Creation. God created all things from nothing, by His word alone God brought forth all that is from nothing in six literal twenty four hour days as the Scripture plainly says it was done. God spoke, thus there is no debate. Can I prove this? I don't have to, God said so. The crux of the matter however is that no man has ever proved beyond doubt it was any other way. Thus we stand with two choices before us, believe God or believe man. As Joshua said, as for me and my house we will serve the Lord.

Suggested Sermon Outline

Is There a Design Flaw in People?

Genesis 3:1-24

Did God create man evil and perverse like this?

No. On the contrary, God created man good and in His image, that is, in true righteousness and holiness, so that he might rightly know God his Creator, love Him with his whole heart, and live with him in eternal blessedness, praising and glorifying Him.

Where, then, does this corruption of human nature come from?

From the fall and disobedience of our first parents, Adam and Eve, in the Garden of Eden; whereby our human life is so poisoned that we are all conceived and born in the state of sin.

But are we so perverted that we are altogether unable to do good and prone to do evil?

Yes, unless we are born again through the Spirit of God.

I. Did God Make a Creation Mistake?

A. God made the world perfect. And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day. (Genesis 1:31)

B. The original design mirrored God Himself. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. (Genesis 1:27)

C. True righteousness and holiness were the primary design characteristics of original humanity. And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. (Ephesians 4:24)

D. God intended people to live with Him as friends. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. (Revelation 21:3)

+ This closing image of the future recalls original intent and gives hope for a final restoration of God's design.

II. The Fall Explains the Human Condition

A. Here is what took place. Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise,

she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. (Genesis 3:1-6)⁹

B. Sin devolves through normal human heredity from the first family.

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned (Romans 5:12)

C. As people think through their own experience they find evidence of the Biblical analysis. Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. (Psalm 51:5)

III. Only Starting Over Will Solve the Problem

A. Whatever people may excuse or accommodate, God continues to demand holiness. GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. (Genesis 6:5)

B. The substitutionary atonement of Christ for the believer is the only way out of the problem. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. (Isaiah 53:6)

C. The struggle for holiness arises in the context of the atonement. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. (2 Corinthians 7:1)

D. No one can get around the reality of the substitutionary atonement through Christ. Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one. (Job 14:4)

E. End products will reflect starting materials. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. (John 3:6)

F. Jesus summarized the facts of life. Jesus answered Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God (John 3:5)

⁹The Westminster Shorter Catechism states in Question 10, The covenant being made with Adam, not on only for himself, but for his is posterity: a all mankind, descending from him by ordinary generation sinned in him, and fell with him, in his first transgression.

G. The future is far better than one could speculate apart from Scripture.

Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be.- but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.
(1 John 3:1,2)

Heidelberg Catechism

Lord's Day 3

Questions 6-8