



Creation

Taught at our Sunday evening service, 1st May 2022 @ Deal Christian Fellowship

Reading: Acts 17:22-34

Good evening. Let's pray.

Series introduction

Tonight, we are starting a new series looking at things we believe as Christians. Of course, there are many things we believe - but in particular the things we will look at over these 7 weeks are foundational to our faith. While there may be room to disagree on some smaller topics in life that the Bible speaks little about, that's not the case here - for these beliefs, these doctrines, are not found in just a single verse of the Bible, but rather are spoken of in many places.

And so, the topics we'll look at are:

- Creation
- Infallibility (of the Bible)
- Incarnation (God with us)
- Resurrection
- Baptism
- Salvation
- Jesus' return

As we go through these topics, it will be helpful to keep in mind what we read in 2 Timothy:

2 Timothy 3:16-17

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

The Bible, inspired by God, is profitable. For what? For doctrine - that is; what we believe. For reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. Why? That as Christians we might have all we need, that we might do all we should. And if we move away from what the Bible teaches, we won't be adequately prepared.

So then, let's begin looking at tonight's topic of Creation.

Creation

Simply put, we believe that God created the world in 6 days. That puts us completely at odds with the popular theory that nothing exploded into everything, and that it randomly produced all life - that is, the big bang theory, and theory of evolution.

So, do Christians believe in Creation in spite of the science? No. Not at all. In fact, it could be argued the other way round - that rather it is those who believe in random chance producing all we see who are the ones that believe in spite of the evidence. For at its core, science is knowledge - that's what the word means. It's based on what we can observe in the world around us. And overwhelmingly, creation points to a creator - which we'll get to more later in our study.

But let's start with a necessary question for us as Christians. Is it important? That is, does it matter what happened? Does it matter what we believe about how the world got here? Or how life started?

The simple answer? Yes. Yes it does. So let's take a look at why.

The theological considerations

In the very first verse of the Bible we read:

Genesis 1:1

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

Plain and simple, the Bible says God created the world. We then read how over 6 days He created all we see in it, not in a state which would evolve into all we see, but created things as we see them. Genesis even points out that everything reproduced after its kind. We read:

Genesis 1:21

So God created great sea creatures and every living thing that moves, with which the waters abounded, according to their kind, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

Then a few verses later we read:

Genesis 1:24-25

Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth the living creature according to its kind: cattle and creeping thing and beast of the earth, each according to its kind"; and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth according to its kind, cattle according to its kind, and everything that creeps on the earth according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

If you disagree with these verses, you're already in the realm of saying that you will only believe the bits of the Bible you agree with. And if you can't trust all of it, which bits *can* you trust?

But of even greater significance than that, if you deny that God created all we see, as we see it, then you make Jesus a liar, for we read in Mark's gospel:

Mark 10:5-9

And Jesus answered and said to them, "Because of the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. But from the beginning of the creation, God made them male and female.' For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'; so then they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."

You have 3 options. Jesus knew what He was saying, and it was true. Or, Jesus was mistaken - which is a problem since we believe He is God who knows everything. Or He knew it wasn't true and said it anyway, which means He was lying - which in turn means He was sinning, which means He wasn't sinless, and couldn't be our Saviour. Which means you are still in your sins.

This IS a big deal. And it's not like Jesus only stated once that God was responsible for creation. Later in Mark's gospel we read this:

Mark 13:19

For in those days there will be tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the creation which God created until this time, nor ever shall be.

Again, the rest of scripture is clear on this matter - with many stating that God created us, or even God talking through them says the same.

Job heard and wrote:

Job 4:17

'Can a mortal be more righteous than God?
Can a man be more pure than his Maker?

David wrote (and probably sung):

Psalms 95:6

Oh come, let us worship and bow down;
Let us kneel before the LORD our Maker.

While his son Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived, wrote:

Proverbs 22:2

The rich and the poor have this in common,
The LORD is the maker of them all.

God said through the prophet Isaiah:

Isaiah 51:13a

And you forget the LORD your Maker,
Who stretched out the heavens
And laid the foundations of the earth;

And through Jeremiah, contrasting Himself to idols, God says...

Jeremiah 10:16

The Portion of Jacob is not like them,
For He is the Maker of all things,
And Israel is the tribe of His inheritance;
The LORD of hosts is His name.

This is clear, right? But the Bible doesn't stop there. Famously, John's gospel opens with these words, speaking about Jesus - who is also known as the Word:

John 1:1-5

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

Paul contends in his letter to the Christians in Rome that we don't even need our Bible's to recognise that God is our creator:

Romans 1:20

For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse,

And later to the Colossians he writes about Jesus:

Colossians 1:15-17

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.

Of course, not only Paul acknowledges God as his creator. We read in Peter's first letter:

1 Peter 4:19

Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.

And then in Revelation chapter 4 we read John record the following taking place in the throne room of Heaven:

Revelation 4:9-11

Whenever the living creatures give glory and honour and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying:

"You are worthy, O Lord,
To receive glory and honour and power;
For You created all things,
And by Your will they exist and were created."

So does it matter what we believe about how the world got here? Yes - it really does! As Christian's we cannot make Jesus a liar, or His Word untrue, without having a problem far more fundamental problem than our understanding of what happened at the beginning of the world.

In the closing chapter of the Bible, in Revelation 22, John writes this warning:

Revelation 22:18-19

For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

Is this warning about the whole of scripture, or just Revelation? When it comes to whether God is our creator, that makes no difference - for we just read what John recorded in Revelation of what is said before the throne in Heaven. If God is not our creator, He cannot be our Saviour.

The moral considerations

Now those theological considerations really don't leave us with an option as Christians. However, the moral impact of adopting a secular world-view has implications for everyone, for it drastically affects our moral foundation.

Let's start by taking a look at what Paul said in Acts 17, where he is speaking publicly in Athens:

Acts 17:23b-26a

Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you: God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things. And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth...

That is, God created the human race. Race singular. There is no division between black or white. No division between Russian or Ukrainian. And no division between immigrant and resident.

Paul talks about this in the context of Salvation in Romans chapter 10:

Romans 10:12-13

For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved."

However, the implication from what he says in Acts, is that there is no room for racism - we are ALL made in God's image. And to treat one person worse than another simply because of the colour of their skin, the country on their passport, or the language they speak, is detestable.

If the world held to this Biblical foundation, some of the horrors of history - and of our present - would not happen or have happened in the past. Unfortunately, however we've seen the proliferation of evolutionary teaching - and with it, the implication, even belief among some evolutionists that monkeys evolved to black men, to white men.

But what we learn from Creation is much more profound than even this. For we read this in the very first chapter of the Bible:

Genesis 1:27

So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

And later in chapter 9 we read this:

Genesis 9:6

Whoever sheds man's blood,
By man his blood shall be shed;
For in the image of God
He made man.

The fact that we are made in God's image is a massive deal. This is the foundation that says it is utterly wrong to take another man's life - to murder them. Whether that be in the prime of life, or in the vulnerability of old age, poor health, or in the womb.

The sanctity of life is made abundantly clear from the first chapter of the Bible on. When that is replaced with a secular or humanist world-view, we end up accepting abortion, euthanasia and assisted suicide and such. Oh, we could and should dig deeper on these topics - but that's for another time.

One of the Biblical principles under attack in recent years has been the institute of marriage, that God initiated way back at Creation. We read in Genesis chapter 2:

Genesis 2:18-24

And the LORD God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him." Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name. So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him. And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man. And Adam said: "This is now bone of my bones And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man." Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

Jesus quoted this in Mark chapter 10 as we saw earlier, when speaking on divorce, and it is the foundation for Christian marriage. But dismiss what the Bible teaches here and elsewhere, and divorce becomes easily justifiable - even expected. As does same sex marriage. And soon enough, I'm sure the world will be pushing for polygamy to be legalised.

It's not possible to dig into these topics with any detail in such a short study, but I hope you can start to see how much creation impacts how we view the Bible, the world, and our moral framework. Indeed, it stretches further than race, the sanctity of life and marriage, for we find the roots of gender and sex at creation, put in place and encouraged by God Himself - we read in Genesis 1:

Genesis 1:27-28

So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

In Genesis chapter 3, we also see the fall of man recorded - where for the first time, sin enters the world - and with it, death. Theologically, we have a problem if we arrived here through evolution - for death entered before sin.

Indeed, there is no place for sin in an evolutionary world-view, for there is no moral compass set by God, but only *opinions* on what is right and wrong. Morals become relative and changeable. Even our understanding of struggle, pain, sickness and death are fundamentally changed - for with evolution, survival of the fittest means these things are a necessary by-product of evolution, rather than the effect of sin. And if there is no sin, why do we need a Saviour?

Not only is the reality of sin distorted, but so is our understanding of the nature of God. First, if God allowed evolution, and therefore death and suffering to take place before sin entered the world, then that makes Him at best unkind, and worst completely unjust.

Indeed our understanding of the Old Testament becomes utterly confused when we move away from the Biblical teaching of creation. For there we read:

Genesis 3:15

And I will put enmity
Between you and the woman,
And between your seed and her Seed;
He shall bruise your head,
And you shall bruise His heel."

From this moment in the Garden of Eden on, Satan did all he could to prevent Jesus being born. That is the Seed God is talking about here. For Satan did not want us to be saved, and so infiltrated this world through the Giant tribes that we see filled the earth with wickedness before the flood, and hounded Israel after it. With a Biblical world-view we see that God was not cruel or unkind in destroying the giants in the flood, or through Moses, Joshua, Samson or David and others afterward. Rather we see God's grace at work throughout the Old Testament as the line is preserved from Adam through to Jesus.

Now finally, though there are more implications to our morals and our doctrine than these things, there's just one more that I think we should acknowledge now, and that is our purpose in life. For there is nothing more amazing than to know that there is a purpose for your life, and despite all your failings, God loves you enough to send His own son to die in your place, that you may have eternal life - forgiven and free!

However, if choosing to believe in the Big Bang theory and the theory of Evolution, then we must conclude that there is no purpose to our lives - that frankly, we are a cosmic accident. There are no rules, no right and wrong. That's utterly depressing, and is it any wonder that when our schools teach this, our children lack purpose? I dread to think of how many have taken their lives wrongly believing there is no purpose to them - not knowing that there is a God that loves them.

Before we move on, let me be very clear - the Bible does *not* teach that those who are not Christians are all racists who are pro-abortion, pro-euthanasia, anti-marriage, and find no purpose in life. But remove the Bible, even remove just creation from it, and not only is our faith destroyed, but so is our moral framework and purpose in life. And from that, comes many problems.

The scientific considerations

So, we've considered *why* it's important to hold fast to what the Bible says happened at creation, but maybe you're left thinking, "I want to believe what the Bible says, but hasn't science proved the Big Bang and Evolution?"

Well, the short answer is no. It has not. Not even close - despite how many documentaries you'll find on TV, and despite what Sir David Attenborough or Professor Brian Cox say. But something that you'll often hear is "all scientists agree that..." followed by some kind of evolutionary world view statement. But that's not true either. In fact, this isn't about Creation vs Science. Because Science is merely a tool. A useful and important tool. But just a tool. Science isn't the conclusion, it's what *leads* you to a conclusion. That means you can indeed be a Christian and scientific.

In fact, some of the most prominent scientists in history believed the Bible. From Robert Boyle (whom Boyle's law is named after), to Wernher von Braun (who pioneered rocketry and space exploration), Michael Faraday (whom the Faraday measurement unit is named after), William Herschel (who discovered the planet Uranus), Samuel Morse (who developed the telegraph and Morse code), Blaise Pascal (who invented the barometer), and Louis Pasteur (who developed vaccinations and immunisations and is considered one of the founders of microbiology).

And of course, Sir Isaac Newton - who not only believed the Bible, but wrote more about it than he did about science! And today, you'll still find scientists and other highly intelligent people who hold fast to the Bible. However, as tempting as it is to name some, and mention their qualifications - I think we must be careful not to try and list how many scientists believe the Bible as some kind of evidence in itself for it.

No rather, these folks, and those throughout history, who believed the Bible, didn't believe it because others did - but because they were utterly convinced that the evidence for creation was too compelling to ignore. Whether that is the intricate and awe inspiring design of the human body, or the supposedly simple cell (which is anything but simple, but the way), or whether it is the precise placement of the Earth from the Sun, the angle at which its axis is set, or the unique atmosphere we have that supports life, or whether it is the symmetry we see in living things.

But further, add to that the lack of evidence for evolution that one would expect if it were true - from the missing links; the transitional forms which are still missing in the fossil record, to the small population on earth compared to that which would be expected with an evolutionary time-scale - and you find there is no credible theory outside of what the Bible says happened.

In fact, the numerous flaws in the theory of evolution don't just show it to be unlikely, they show it to be impossible. "Give me examples", you say! Good, I have your interest. But in part for conciseness this evening, I'm not going to start listing the things that have stood out to me, but point you in the direction of some good resources where you can learn more:

- The Creator Series: Dr Mark Eastman & Chuck Missler
- One Small Speck - Dr Vij Soderia
- Evolution vs God - Living Waters/Ray Comfort
- Expelled: No intelligence allowed - Ben Stein
- Science Vs Evolution - Barry Forder

Further to these specific resources, there are some good organisations where you can learn more:

- Answers In Genesis - AnswersInGenesis.org
- Institute for Creation Research - IRC.org
- Creation Ministries International - Creation.com
- Creation Science Movement - CSM.org.uk
- Creation Resources Trust - CRT.org.uk

Summary

As I close this study this evening, I want to urge you to take note of a few things. First, a Biblical understand of Creation is fundamental to what we believe as Christians. Second, the absence of this foundation opens the way to many of the moral difficulties we face today. And third, we don't have a blind faith - this isn't a hope in something we can't investigate, test or observe. This is something where we can apply honest scientific reasoning, looking at the facts, to determine not only that evolution is impossible, but that the Bible is reasonable and trustworthy.

We'd do well as Christians to dig deeper on this too - for it's easy to become complacent, being sure in our own faith, but forgetting that many people have questions on this subject. We don't need to be able to articulate every scientific argument for Creation or against evolution, but we do need to be ready to give a reason for the hope that is in us, being sure in our faith.

Parents, you need to be talking to your children about this, and you need to do all you can talking to their teachers about it too. For our school system is continually drip-feeding an evolutionary world view to our children. Don't make the terrible mistake of letting them be the sole voice on this subject to your child.

The only caution I'd give is that while this subject is hugely important, it's not the *most* important thing. That is, why get entrenched in battle with someone in disputes over creation when believing God created the world won't save them? Don't forget to share the gospel, for we're not trying to convince someone's intellect, but lead them to Christ who alone is able to save their soul.

Application questions

As I've got in the habit of doing, there are some application questions that I'll share, in the hope that it helps both you and I apply these things to our lives:

- Do we honour God as our creator?
- Have we compromised our trust in the Bible?
- Are we doing what we should in building our own or other's faith in this area?

Let's pray.