

TEACHING GOAL

Establish that the universe and all in it was created from nothing (ex-nihilo) by a free act of God.

DOCTRINAL STANDARDS

- Q.** How does God execute His decrees?
- A.** God executes His decrees in the works of Creation and Providence.
- Q.** What is the work of creation?
- A.** The work of creation is, God's making all things from nothing, by the word of His power, in the space of six days, and all very good.

S.C. 8-9; L.C. 14-15; W.C. of F. IV; Savoy 4; Young 16-17

SCRIPTURAL BASIS

Study Passage: Genesis 1:1-25

Support Passages: Hebrews 11:1-6; Romans 1:20; Revelation 4:11; Colossians 1:16; Psalm 33:6-12; Nehemiah 9:5-8 (Notice the connection to God's decrees in these passages)

BIBLE STORY

Genesis 1; The six days of creation.

MEMORY ASSIGNMENT

"And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him." (Hebrews 11:6, ESV)

APPLICATION

We do not have faith that pleases God if we do not believe that He created all things from nothing.

SUMMARY

Having studied the nature of the decrees of God, wherein everything that comes to pass was and is ordered by God, we now examine the primary means by which His decrees are carried out. When the King makes decrees, He also establishes a means wherewith to carry them out. This is done by God in His works of creation and providence, the former having been accomplished and the latter a continuing process which we are soon to study.

When it comes to the origin of the physical universe, which of course is the essence of the doctrine of creation, only the Bible provides the truth of the matter. No scientist or philosopher has any means at his disposal for proving hypotheses that do not concur with the biblical record because it is not possible to go back in history to reconstruct either the context or the data in order to examine them. In addition, most of the data before us today support the biblical position and raise serious questions regarding the prevailing scientific theories.

The description of the six creative days in Genesis chapter 1, clearly speaks of every classification of physical things from the astronomical universe to bacteria. As God created Adam as an adult so He created the entire universe, functioning and mature. There is no reason to reject this proposition because the all-powerful God who creates from nothing is surely capable of creating a universe that is mature. Apparently, the only motive to conceive of the creative days as long periods of time comes from the halls of science. I dare say that most unbelieving scientists believe that universe and the earth are very old, but many believers also have yielded to the pressure theorize some sort of evolutionary process taking place during long creative days. My point is this: Scripture does not demand the concept of long creative days and neither does science, if what is here was created by almighty God.

Notice the structure in Genesis 1:5, 8, 13, etc., "and there was evening and there was morning, one day." Surely this in itself does not lead one to the conclusion that these days are long periods of time, yet, how does this phrase "evening" and "morning" fit a long period of time? Created living things do not require long periods of time to evolve since they came into being instantly by the "word of God", and God "spoke and it was done, He commanded and it stood fast." (Hebrews 1:3; Psalm 33:9) In addition, the fourth commandment (Exodus 20:11) virtually precludes the long day concept when it mentions the Sabbath "day", obviously a 24-hour day, in the same context as the six creative days. Notice that this is also the case in Genesis 2:2 and 3. Much of the pressure to accept the long day position comes from the geologist who postulates eons of glacier movements and weather, to account for the mountains and valleys. However, we must not neglect the effect of the Flood (Genesis 7:10-24) in this regard.

Of course, the evolutionist does not either accept the Flood, but this monumental physical phenomenon accounts for much of the modern appearance of the earth. Before the Flood, there was no rain; the plants and animals received water by a "mist" that rose from the earth. (Genesis 2:5-6) No coal or oil depos-

its were created by this gentle means of caring for living creatures, but the great pressures and temperatures of the Flood very likely brought them into existence.

Originally, creation was "very good", (Genesis 1:31) and one wonders if it is still good. To suggest an answer to this, we hasten to note that "good" meant, among other things, that the creation was ecologically good and harmonious and that Adam was morally good after God's own image. Yet we may still observe the "good" creation of God in its beauty, the perfection of physical law and its natural ecology. It is not chaos. Nature is not twisted and depraved, to the contrary, it is mankind that are depraved who delight in portraying God's earth as twisted and chaotic. We must live under the curse of death not because nature sinned against God but because our first parents did, yet, "the heavens are declaring the glory of God; and the firmament is declaring the work of His hands." (Psalm 19:1) While the whole creation "groans and suffers the pains of childbirth" (Romans 8:22; Jeremiah 12:4,11), yet this pain is the result of sin and sins. Sinful mankind messes up his environment and destroys beauty.

God's creation is still good and beautiful, but "cursed" with death and sinful man. That which is beautiful, which follows precise physical laws, which has design such as atomic structure, does not derive from a "big bang" or evolve. Energy cannot suddenly decide to become matter with atomic design, and genetic material (DNA) cannot be produced from random processes. Indeed life itself cannot suddenly appear by itself and is certainly not simply a chemical reaction. These things come only by creation and creation comes only from a wise and powerful, sovereign God.