

THE HOLY TRINITY UNIVERSITY



- Dogma II
- The Doctrine of Creation

The Doctrine of Creation

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Chapter One

1. Introduction

As St. Basil the Great said, "We should understand in the creation the original cause of the Father as a founding cause, the cause of the Son as a creative, and the cause of the Spirit as an implementing one." Thus the Father is the "Creator of all things", the Son is the one "through whom all things were made", and the Holy Spirit is the one "in whom are all things". Everything that He (God the Creator) had made ... was very good" (Gen. 1:31), because "first He conceived, and His conception was a work carried out by His Word, and perfectly by His Spirit.

"Out of nothing" (ex nihilo) finds its first expression in the Bible. "Beholding the heavens and the earth, and seeing all that is there, you will understand that God has created it all from nothing" (2 Macc. 7:28). Thus, the creation springs into being or passes into being out of non-being. As St. Gregory of Nyssa affirms, "It begins to be, and the very substance of the creation owes its beginning to change". This transition from non-existence is a change brought about by God's creative Word "who has established the world so that it shall not be moved" (Ps. 93:1)

Before their fall the first human beings experienced the creation as one harmonious whole. It was like a beautiful garden (paradeisos, Gen. 2:8) which they tended with care and love. The human fall, however, which was essentially a sinful exercising of human freedom, introduced forces of disintegration into the body of creation. Humanity experienced a two-fold alienation. On the one hand, it was estranged from the Creator, since Adam and Eve tended to hide themselves away from the sight of God (cf. Gen. 3:8) as their communion with the source of life and light was broken. On the other hand, humanity lost its capacity to enter into a proper relation with nature and with the body of the creation. Enmity between the natural world and human beings replaced the relationship of harmony and care. Domination and exploitation of the creation for selfish ends by greedy human beings became the order of history. Thus, manifold forms of disintegration set in which converged in the fact of death and corruption. Fear of death instilled anxiety, acquisitiveness, greed, hatred and despair in human beings. Modern forms of economic exploitation, racial oppression, social inequalities, war, genocide, etc. are all consequences of the fear of death and collective signs of death.

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1.1 The Doctrine of Creation

Why we study the Doctrine of Creation?

To keep the Earth from damage.

To memorize God's Job.

To praise God.

To live in harmony with creatures,

To keep belief in the Existence of God.

To realize the role of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in the ministry of creation.

According to the Scriptures, creation is a gift from a loving Creator God. From the bodies we inhabit, the air we breathe, the sun we bask in, the food we eat, the flowers we pick, the water we drink, the ground we walk upon, and the pets we love, to the pleasures we enjoy and destinations we visit on vacation, life is filled with good gifts for us to steward and enjoy.

People who do not understand the doctrine of creation and the doctrines that relate to it want to die. Some die a little bit at a time, weeping until they are empty and can no longer muster any tears. Others medicate themselves with prescriptions; antidepressants are now the most sold category of medicine, and depression is the most common diagnosis. Still others self-medicate with sex, food, alcohol, drugs, gambling, entertainment, video games, Internet surfing, and anything else that can serve as a diversion from the "unyielding despair.

The doctrine of creation states that God, who alone is uncreated and eternal, has formed and given existence to everything outside of Him. He did this from nothing by the word of his power, and all of it was very good.

For all eternity, he had been enjoying perfect fellowship and perfect love as the three-in-one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Creation was an overflow of his perfection not a manifestation of his inherent imperfection or lack. This means that God did not need to create in order not to be lonely. He did not need to create in order for him to be able to love. He was self-sufficient; he needed nothing outside of himself.

Study about the doctrine of Creation answers:

1. Where do I come from? (The question of origins)
2. Who am I? (The question of significance)
3. Why is the world in such a mess? (The question of evil)

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4. Is there a future? (The question of purpose)

5, what is my role to keep and distract Creation.

The Orthodox Biblical doctrine of creation is stated in the Apostles' Creed where it refers to God the Father as the maker of heaven and earth. This belief is one of the basic foundations of true biblical Christianity.

Apart from the above it is also the means to understand “**The role of natural revelation and natural theology.**”

1.2 The meaning of Creation.

1. The act of creating; the act of causing to exist; and especially, the act of bringing this world into existence. Romans 1.

2. The act of making, by new combinations of matter, invested with new forms and properties, and of subjecting to different laws; the act of shaping and organizing; as the creation of man and other animals, of plants, minerals, &c.

3. The act of investing with a new character; as the creation of peers in England.

4. The act of producing.

5. The things created; creatures; the world; the universe.

As subjects then the whole creation came.

6. Any part of the things created.

Before the low creation swarmed with men.

7. Anything produced or caused to exist.

A false creation, proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain.

In creation ministry, The Nature of God is Displayed.

- **God is Eternal**

Since everything had a beginning through God's act of creation, it proves that He is eternal.

- **God's Powerful Nature**

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The Bible clearly requires us also to believe that God created the universe out of nothing. The common Latin phrase used to describe what creation teaches is *Ex Nihilo*. This means that before God began to create the universe, nothing else existed aside from Him.

- **God is a Talking God**

Another spectacular truth we see in God's act of creation is the personal nature of God. He is a personal being because He speaks. We see this nature directly from Genesis 1 where we read that God speaks.

- **God is Independent and Sovereign over Everything**

The act of creation declares that God is not a part of or dependent on His creation. This is crucial to our understanding of the nature of God.

God Alone is the Sustainer of All Creation

Contrary to the Deist's idea of God, this entire creation is not like an old clock that as long as it has been wound up doesn't need any more intervention from God to run its course. The Bible affirms that God did not create the world, and the rest of its course is left to itself to function properly.

- **Church Fathers on Creation**

Justin Martyr

"For as Adam was told that in the day he ate of the tree he would die, we know that he did not complete a thousand years [Gen. 5:5]. We have perceived, moreover, that the expression 'The day of the Lord is a thousand years' [Ps. 90:4] is connected with this subject" (*Dialogue with Trypho the Jew* 81 [A.D. 155]).

Clement of Alexandria

"And how could creation take place in time, seeing time was born along with things which exist? . . . That, then, we may be taught that the world was originated and not suppose that God made it in time, prophecy adds: 'This is the book of the generation, also of the things in them, when they were created in the day that God made heaven and earth' [Gen. 2:4]. For the expression 'when they were created' intimates an indefinite and dateless production" (*Miscellanies* 6:16 [A.D. 208]).

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Basil The Great

“‘And there was evening and morning, one day.’ Why did he say ‘one’ and not ‘first’? . . . He said ‘one’ because he was defining the measure of day and night . . . since twenty-four hours fill.

ቅዳሜ ለእሁድ አጥቢያ በጊዜ ሠርክ ሰባት ፍጥረታትን ፈጠረ። ምንና ምን ቢሉ አራቱ ባሕርያትን፣ ሰማያትን፣ መላእክትን፣ ጨለማን ፈጠረ፤ በባሕርዬ አራት ነገሮች አሉብኝ ሲል አራቱን ባሕርያት ፈጠረ። በባሕርዬስ ያሉ አራቱ ባሕርያት ምንና ምን ናቸው ቢሉ ኃያልነት፣ መንጽሐኒት/የ ያነፃ/፣ ፈታሒነት/ፈራጅ/፣ ባዕልነት/ባለጸጋነት/ ናቸው። ኃያል ነኝ ሲል እሳትን ፈጠረ፤ እሳት ኃያል ነው፤ ውኃ ልከለከለው ቀጽላለውንም፣ ደጋውንም፣ እርጥቡንም፣ ደረቁንም ልብላ ቢል ይቻለዋል። እንደዚህም ሁሉ ጌታ ከሀሊነቱ ካልከለከለው ታላቁንም፣ ታናሹንም፣ ክፉውንም፣ መልካሙንም አንድ ጊዜ ላጥፋ ቢል ይቻለዋልና። አክሲማሮስ 1

The Holy Scripture begins with God created heaven and earth ascertaining the existence of God Gen`1:1 St Paul also said the builder of all things God Heb`3:4

God brought the world out of nothing into being by his word. He said Tet it be! there was nothing before the creation of the world. wisdom.11:17;•1 Maccab. 27:1.

St. Paul explained that God created the world out of nothing when he said By the faith we understand that the world was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was made out of things which do not appear Heb`11

Chapter Two

2. The Universe and its Characteristics.

God says that the cosmos was fashioned in six days, not because the maker was in need of a length of time—for God surely did everything at the same time, not only in giving commands but also in his thinking creation of the intelligible cosmos.

Cosmos is originally a Greek word, meaning both "order" and "world," because the ancient Greeks thought that the world was perfectly harmonious and impeccably put in order. We now

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use *cosmos* without the idea of perfect order. Now it means, "all of creation," and particularly on the scale of the stars, the planets, the black holes, the other universes.

The great importance of cosmology for theology, especially Christian theology, raises the more fundamental issue of the general relationship of religion to the cosmos. This relationship has not received as much recent attention as it merits.

St. John Chrysostom, in his Homily, in which he interpreted this epistle of the Apostle said, God brought all and everything out of nothing in to being to manifest His glory through His works. As the spirit of human beings is invisible but is known by the state of motion, God is invisible to bodily eyes, but is manifested and known through His will and works.²

St. David also (psalms 19:1-2) tells us that "The heavens declare the glory of God: and the firmament shows His handy-work." As St. Paul has stated clearly, God is known to His creations by the things that are made when he said, "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God has showed it unto them. For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen being understood by the things that are made by His eternal power and God head so that they are without excuse" (Rom. 1:19-20)

St. Paul also said "the builder of all things is God". (Heb. 3:4). God brought the world out of nothing into being by his word. He said, "Let it be!" There was nothing before the creation of the world. (Wis. 11:17), 1 Maccab. 27:1). St. Paul explained that God created the world out the nothing when he said "By faith we understand that the world was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was made out of things which do not appear". (Heb. 11:3).

God created all and everything after their own kinds for His glory so that His power shall be glorified and

His name be hallowed. Isaiah the prophet quoted the word of God by saying, "... everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for may glory, whom I formed and made". (Isa. 43:7).

The Holy Scripture makes it clear that all the creations were created in six days after their won kinds Sunday to Friday. Numerically, these creations are divided into twenty two groups. (Gen 1:1 31; Jubilee 3:9).

² (John Chrysostom Homily; Rom.1:19).

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Chapter Three

God's Wisdom and Glory in Creation

Genesis 1–2 gives us the narrative of how God created the universe, but several places in Scripture give us a poetic interpretation of the same events to draw out different emphases. Genesis tells us what happened, and these other passages draw out the significance of these historical events—what it says about God. A prime example of another place where Scripture does the same sort of thing is in Exodus. Exodus 14 has the narrative account of the crossing of the Red Sea, and then directly after, Exodus 15 has a song about the same event. And while there are details in the poetic account that clearly echo the narrative account, the song is more interested in glorifying God—Yahweh—who performed this great miracle, and extolling His might and graciousness for the act. In other words, Exodus 14 tells us what happened, and Exodus 15 tells us about the God who did it. A similar prose/poetry sequence was written about Deborah and Barak defeating Sisera, the oppressive Canaanite commander. Judges 4 is the historical narrative, and Judges 5 is the song about the same battle, glorifying Yahweh who gave them victory. Wisdom as a divine trait

One poetic account of creation is in Proverbs 8, and the main character is not Yahweh, as such, but Wisdom. Wisdom is personified as a woman, but behind this personification, she clearly has divine attributes. Some have identified her with the Second Person of the Trinity, based on Jesus also being called God's wisdom in 1 Corinthians 1:30. This idea has some merit, since Jesus is certainly characterized with and was filled with wisdom even from His youth (Luke 2:40). However, a major problem is that it would be the only place in Scripture where a Person of the Godhead is portrayed as female—and God is portrayed as relationally male in the rest of the Bible.

Wisdom as the personification of a divine **trait** which is possessed equally by the Father, Son, and Spirit

Furthermore, all three Persons of the Trinity eternally share perfect wisdom. So it would be more consistent with biblical theology and the theme of the book of Proverbs to interpret Wisdom as the personification of a divine **trait** which is possessed equally by the Father, Son, and Spirit—but which is also attainable in some measure for the person who fears and worships the Lord.

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Wisdom is first anthropomorphized (ascribed human features) in Proverbs 1:20–33, where she is a sort of ‘street preacher’. She is at all the busiest parts of town, telling anyone who will hear to forsake their simple-mindedness and scoffing—or be prepared to face the consequences of their foolishness.² There are direct parallels between Wisdom’s statements, and God’s words and actions elsewhere in Scripture. For example, compare Wisdom:

If you turn at my reproof, behold, I will pour out my spirit upon you (Proverbs 1:23).

and Yahweh:

And I will not hide my face anymore from them, when I pour out my Spirit upon the house of Israel, declares the Lord God (Ezekiel 39:29).

And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams and your young men shall see visions. Even on the male and female servants in those days will I pour out my Spirit (Joel 2:28–29).

Despising Wisdom is seen as equivalent to rejecting “the fear of the Lord” (Proverbs 1:29). Rejecting Wisdom is rejecting God. This is because wisdom comes from the Lord (Proverbs 2:6).

Wisdom and creation

Several times in Scripture, God’s wisdom is linked with creation:

O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all (Psalm 104:24).

It is he who made the earth by his power, who established the world by his wisdom, and by his understanding stretched out the heavens (Jeremiah 10:12; 51:15).

Proverbs says:

The Lord by wisdom founded the earth; by understanding he established the heavens; by his knowledge the deeps broke open, and the clouds drop down the dew (Proverbs 3:19–20).

God’s creation testifies to His attributes, and the way the world is ordered is evidence of God’s wisdom.

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The idea is that God's creation testifies to His attributes (cf. Romans 1), and that the way the world is ordered is evidence of God's wisdom. This would be similar to the 'intelligent design' argument: the world could only have come from a wise Creator. This is in stark contrast to the creation myths of other ancient religions that explained the universe as the result of a chaotic war between the gods.

The longest description of Wisdom's role in creation is found in Proverbs 8:22–31, where she is again personified:

The Lord possessed me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of old. Ages ago I was set up, at the first, before the beginning of the earth. When there were no depths I was brought forth, when there were no springs abounding with water. Before the mountains had been shaped, before the hills, I was brought forth, before he had made the earth with its fields, or the first of the dust of the world.

When he established the heavens, I was there; when he drew a circle on the face of the deep, when he made firm skies above, when he established the fountains of the deep, when he assigned to the sea its limit, so that the waters might not transgress his command, when he marked out the foundations of the earth, then I was beside him, like a master workman, and I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always, rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the children of man.

This tells us that Wisdom is as eternal as God Himself—because Wisdom comes from God, and He has always possessed it. The above list of the things that Wisdom preceded has obvious parallels in Genesis 1, and “the first of the dust of the world” is probably an oblique reference to Adam, who was formed from the dust (Genesis 2:7, cf. 1 Corinthians 15:47).

Wisdom was also a major organizing principle for God's creation. We can see this in the orderly account in Genesis 1, where God develops the universe from the formless and empty state at the beginning of Day 1 to the inhabited world at the end of Day 6. At every stage, God's wisdom determined how things would proceed. Wisdom not only ensured that His creation was perfect, but it was also a cause for delight in what was created, from beginning to end. We see this with the repeated refrain “And God saw it was good” in Genesis 1.

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Not every detail in Genesis 1 is repeated in Proverbs 8, and it is not repeated in the order of the narrative. That is not unexpected in a poetic passage. But what is stated is clearly dependent on and intends to recall Genesis 1. The presence of Wisdom at every point, from “the beginning” to the creation of man is brought out in the text.

Often when people think about wisdom, they imagine a character like **Qōheleth** (‘Preacher’) in Ecclesiastes, whose superior knowledge of the folly of man drives him to despair. But Wisdom in this passage is completely the opposite. She rejoiced in the Creator’s work as much as He delighted in Wisdom. This perfect fellowship is like the fellowship the three Persons of the Godhead enjoy.

Wisdom vs Folly

Wisdom is contrasted with the adulteress early on. Though the adulteress has “smooth words” (Proverbs 2:16), “her house sinks down to death, and her paths to the departed” (2:18). Folly promises the same pleasures that wisdom does, but without any of the hard work and integrity: “Stolen water is sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant” (9:17).

The contrast between Wisdom and Folly is closely linked with the contrast between the wise woman and the foolish woman: “The wisest of women builds her house, but folly with her own hands tears it down” (Proverbs 14:1). In fact, the ideal woman described in Proverbs 31 is a picture of a woman who is guided by wisdom. This is shown by the parallels between how she is described, and how Wisdom is described. Probably the most obvious parallel is that this virtuous woman and Wisdom are both described as being “more precious than jewels” (or “rubies”, KJV—Proverbs 3:15, 31:10). And there are similar parallels between Folly and the adulterous woman.

The priceless value of wisdom

Wisdom is an example of a divine trait that people are exhorted to acquire and cultivate (that is, it is a **communicable attribute**) at any cost:

Blessed is the one who finds wisdom, and the one who gets understanding, for the gain from her is better than gain from silver and her profit better than gold. She is more precious than jewels, and nothing you desire can compare with her (Proverbs 3:13–15).

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Indeed, throughout Proverbs, wisdom is the decisive factor that determines whether a person will succeed in life or fail. God rewarded the main author of the Proverbs, King Solomon, for asking for wisdom (1 Kings 3:5–14; 2 Chronicles 1:7–12). And the foundation of this wisdom is the fear of Yahweh, specifically (Proverbs 9:10, 15:33). Not just any religion will bring wisdom—only the Lord who created through wisdom can grant it to His people.

God loves creatures for their own sake.

Far from creating the rest of the world to serve humans, God created humans in God's image to serve and care for the Earth. God loves all creation for its own sake. The Psalms (e. g. Psalms 104 and 148) show God delighting in all creatures. Notice how God made many parts of creation for the benefit of other creatures! For example, God made the springs of water for the wild animals. God made the grass for the cattle. God made the trees for the birds to nest. God made rain to water the forests and the mountains. God made the mountain crags for the goats. (Ps 104:10-30). God delights in all creatures and provides for them. God calls humans to honor their right to life and to foster their well-being. "O Lord! How manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures . . . These all look to you to give them their food in due season." (Psalm 104:10-30).

We see the vocational responsibility for creation in the Noah story, when Noah was commanded to rescue all the creatures from extinction by flood. "As for me I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you" (Genesis 9:9-10; see also Hosea 2:18) the vocational responsibility for creation in the Noah story, when Noah was commanded to rescue all the creatures from extinction by flood.

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“As for me I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you” (Genesis 9:9-10; see also Hosea 2:18).

At that time, God made a covenant not only with humans but also with all the animals! We often focus so much on the covenants of Abraham and Moses that God made with humans, and we neglect the covenant of Noah. Here God has a covenantal relationship not just with humans but with all creation! The rainbow was a sign of the covenant: “This [rainbow] is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature.” (Genesis 9:12). the human responsibility to care for creation in the Sabbath laws of the land of Israel “Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God; you shall not do any work—you, your son or daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the resident alien in your land.” (Exodus 20:8-10) But in the seventh year there shall be a Sabbath of complete rest for the land, a Sabbath for the Lord.” (Leviticus 25:4)

As with humans, all creation is called to praise God. Our solidarity with the rest of creation does not stop with a sense of kinship with creation or even with our reverence for life. We humans are called not just to thank God for creation but to praise god with creation.

We are to behold creation and know that it is praising God. Imagine how our worship might change if we praised God with creation! “Let them [all creation] praise the Lord.” (Psalm 148:13). “Let everything that breathes praise the Lord” (Psalm 150:6). One of the most striking things about the biblical understanding of nature is that all creation is

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commanded to worship God. This does not mean that each animal and plant and land and sea have special sounds to do that, although that may be part of it. No, it means that these created things praise God by doing what they were created to be and to do. You can see this in many passages in the Bible, including this one from I Chronicles. “Worship the lord in holy splendor: tremble before him all the earth. Let the heavens be glad and the Earth rejoice. And let them say among the nations, „The Lord is king.” Let the sea roar and all that fills it; Let the field exalt and everything in it. Then shall the trees of the forest sing for joy before the lord” (I Chronicles 16:29-34; Psalm 148).

The biblical books of wisdom show us that humans learn from creation: The ancients learned much about life and about God by studying nature. In this passage, the animals will teach the presence of God in all creation. “But ask the animals and they will teach you; the birds of the air and they will tell you. Ask the plants of the earth and they will teach you. Ask the fish of the sea and they will declare to you. Who among all these does not know that the hand of the lord has created this? In his hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of every human being.” (Job 12:7-10).

God is Eternal

Since everything had a beginning through God’s act of creation, it proves that He is eternal. As Bill Bright says, “Before He spoke the first work of creation, time did not exist.”³⁴He existed in eternity, which differentiates Him from everything He created. He is not bound to time. Thus, all history is but a little speck within eternity. This is how Abraham described God as he

³ Bill Bright, *God: Discover His Character* (Orlando, FL: NewLife Publications, 1999), pg. 35.

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experienced His faithfulness after making a treaty with Abimelech in Barsheeba. “Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba and called there on the name of the Lord, *the Everlasting God*” (Genesis 21:33). Given that God is the originator of everything, there is nothing that can bring an end to His existence. This is the attribute of God clearly in view when Moses prayed to Him which was recorded in Psalm 90. Moses prayed; “Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God” (Palm 90:1-2). When Paul wrote to Timothy, he thanked God for His patience. Paul said, “But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display His perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in Him for eternal life. To the King of ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen” (1 Timothy 1:16-17).

God is Powerful

The Bible clearly requires us also to believe that God created the universe out of nothing. The common Latin phrase used to describe what creation teaches is *Ex Nihilo*. This means that before God began to create the universe, nothing else existed aside from Him. In other words, the word “nothing” does not imply some kind of existence, as some philosophers have taken it to mean. *Ex Nihilo* means that God did not use any previously existing materials when He created the universe.⁵ Genesis 1:1 says, “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.” Psalm 33: 6 and 9 also tells us, “By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and by the breath of His mouth all their host. For He spoke, and it came to be; He commanded, and it stood

⁵ Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology: an Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), pg. 262.

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firm.” This means that God simply said the words and everything came into being instantaneously and orderly.

The difficulty which people commonly ask regarding creation is twofold: “Who made God?” and “How can God make something out of nothing?” In any case, the Bible says God is eternal. He was not made nor did anything cause Him to exist. Only the universe had a cause, which is God. He is the one who caused everything to exist and “God does not need a cause because He had no beginning.”⁶ The New Testament affirms this truth from several sources. John 1:1-3 says, “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 was not any thing made that was made.” The words “in the beginning” are identical in the original language to the opening words in the Old Testament, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” This is not an accident. What John is doing here is telling us who Jesus is and what He did. Jesus is eternal God, and He created the universe along with the Father. Therefore, the words “in the beginning” mean, before there was any created matter, there was the Word, the Son of God. Jesus Christ was the Father’s agent, or **Word**, in the creation of all things. Jesus our Savior, our Lord, our Friend—is our Maker.

God is a Talking God

Another spectacular truth we see in God’s act of creation is the personal nature of God. He is a personal being because He speaks. We see this nature directly from Genesis 1 where we read that God speaks even as the first human beings were created. God said, “Let us make man in our

⁶ Ravi K. Zacharias and Norman L. Geisler, *Who Made God?: and Answers to over 100 Other Tough Questions of Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), pg. 25.

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image.” This is absolutely crucial to our understanding of the nature of God which we learn right from the beginning. The God we know today and whom we believe, talks. He is not an impersonal power, a product of someone’s spiritual imagination, an abstract force, a spirit that is hard to define, nor is He absolutely unknowable. “He is a talking God. He has personality and dares to disclose Himself in words that human beings understand.”⁷ In other words, He communicates and we get to know Him based on what He says about Himself. Francis Schaeffer drives this idea by saying, “God is there and He is not silent”. Under the rubric that demonstrates God as a personal being is a display of Him communicating as a way of creating the heavens and the earth. God said, “Let there be light” (Genesis 1:3). That is how powerful God’s word is. He just spoke the words and everything came into being.

We might wonder whether God truly spoke some words in creation since no else could hear Him. But that is not true, He was not alone. There is an indication of the existence of a plurality in the personhood of God which we observe before the creation of man. He was communicating and indicating how human beings should be created to other Infinite Beings. The “Word” who is Jesus Himself was with God. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. (John 1:1-2) This “Word” is Jesus who, “Became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). God was definitely not alone before creation. The Son of God and the Holy Spirit were coexisting with Him before the foundation of the world. God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth

7 D. A. Carson, *The God Who Is There: Finding Your Place in God's Story* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2010), pg. 20.

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and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” The Spirit of God was hovering over the water. He exists in relationship with the Son and the Holy Spirit. This is exactly what the Apostle Paul was referring to when he wrote, “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together” (Colossians 1:15-17). The Father is eternally in exists with the other persons in the Godhead. Jesus said, “Father... you loved me before the foundation of the world” (John 17:24). Jesus was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. (John 1:1-3) There never was a time when the Father was alone, was not talking to anyone, or denied of fellowship. God’s love for the Son was seen in the very act of creating.

God is Independent and Sovereign over Everything

The act of creation declares that God is not a part of or dependent on His creation. This is crucial to our understanding of the nature of God. It describes that He is eternally in fellowship within the Trinity and nothing can come close to this kind of relationship. It establishes not only the “being” or “personal nature” of God as a talking God, but it makes God unique in such a way that He is not in need of anything outside of Himself. It is due to this relationship that makes God uniquely other, or “one of a kind”. It means God is not dependent on anyone or anything. He is absolutely free. God is the only source of everything and He is not dependent on anyone else for anything at all. Therefore, nothing compels Him to do anything outside of Himself. He was free and unrestricted in the act of creation. In other words, nothing determined or shaped what He brought into being. J. I Packer says, “How everything was designed was purely God’s own

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idea.”⁸ He is the one who gives life and everything else in the universe gets their life, existence and purpose from Him. The Geneva Catechism explains also this doctrine remarkably well. It says:

“This term does not imply that God created his works at once, and then threw off the care of them. It should rather be understood, that as the world was once made by God, so it is now preserved by him, and that the earth and all other things endure just: in as far as they are sustained by his energy, and as it were his hand. Besides, seeing that he has all things under his hand, it follows, that he is the chief ruler and Lord of all.”⁹

We see more evidence of the essential nature of the doctrine of creation through the teaching of Irenaeus (175-185 CE) against Gnosticism. For Irenaeus the doctrine of creation displays God’s continual government over the world, particularly over the “Churches” from every tongue, and tribe, and people and nations. It is the belief in “One God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and sea and all things that are in them that must unite the Church in the whole world.”¹⁰ For Irenaeus, the truth which expresses God’s authorship of all reality, must be kept or preserved carefully in spite of diverse languages where the Churches had been planted. He says:

“As the sun, that creature of God, is one and the same throughout the whole world, so also the preaching of the truth shineth everywhere, and enlightens all men that are willing to come to a knowledge of the truth.”¹¹

8 J. I. Packer, *Affirming the Apostles' Creed* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2008), pg. 55.

9 "Historic Church Documents at Reformed.org," Center of Reformed Theology and Apologetics, 1996, quotation, accessed January 13, 2011, http://www.reformed.org/documents/index.html?mainframe=http://www.reformed.org/documents/calvin/geneva_catachism/geneva_catachism.html.

10 "Irenaeus-- Against Heresies," Columbia University in the City of New York, Book 10, accessed April 12, 2011, <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/augustine/arch/irenaeus/>.

11 Ibid.

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Thus, the doctrine of creation is one point of doctrine, which must be imported everywhere to understand the nature of God, which guides our faith, preaching, worship.

God Alone is the Sustainer of All Creation

Contrary to the Deist's¹² idea of God, this entire creation is not like an old clock that as long as it has been wound up doesn't need any more intervention from God to run its course. The Bible affirms that God did not create the world, and the rest of its course is left to itself to function properly. God is very much involved in creation. He remains involved with His creation, particularly in the lives of people He created in His image. Thus the God of the Bible is not an abstract deity removed from and uninterested in everything He created.¹³

We also see this emphasis in John Calvin's teaching which is found in the Institutes of the Christian Religion: Book 1 Chapter 5, "The Knowledge of God Conspicuous in the Creation, and Continual Government of the World." This chapter is divided into two major parts. The first part deals with the knowledge and nature of God that is displayed in creation. Here Calvin argues that God's invisible and incomprehensible attributes are made visible to some extent in creation. He maintains that the intricacy of the universe and the complexity of the human body portray God's

¹² Deism is a view that God, the Supreme Being, does not intervene in human affairs or suspend the natural laws of the universe.

¹³ Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology: an Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), pg. 267.

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providence, power and wisdom. Furthermore, God's omnipotence, goodness, justice and mercy are clearly displayed how He created man endowing him with a soul.¹⁴

The second part deals with consequences if man ascribes these admirable arrangements, and the whole order of things to fortune or chance. Calvin argues that the endless and irreconcilable opinion of the philosophers concerning how God created the world primarily corrupts pure religion. Thus, allowing their ideas to influence our thinking about the glories of nature is extreme stupidity and blatant rebellion against God and deserving punishment.

The book of John in the New Testament also affirms this truth even with animals and plants. "In His hand are the life of every living thing and the breath of all mankind" (Job 12:10). The Apostle also affirms that God is continually "upholding the universe by His word of power"(Hebrews 1:3). "The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything" (Acts 17:24-25). God is constantly sustaining everything in the universe with life and that "in Him we live and move and we have our being" (Acts 17:25, 28). Christ is the One Whom "all things hold together," (Colossians 1:17) Everything that is happening in the world is directed by God. This is true even to a point that the falling of a hair or a sparrow is directed by God, no less than the birth and death of Princes, or the revolutions of empires. (Matthew 10:29, 30). Creation then will not continue to exist apart from God's sustaining power, contrary to the Deist's idea of God. This is not how God the creator is depicted in the Bible. The ongoing existence of all creation depends of powerful hands of God through all the seasons and every second of everyday.

¹⁴ "John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion." Internet Christian Library. Accessed February 16, 2011. <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/institutes/>.

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St. Ephrem the Syrian

St. Ephrem the Syrian was a great theologian, and one of the greatest writers in the Syriac language, as the following excerpt from one of his hymns shows. “As the water surrounds the fish and it feels it, So also do all natures feel God. He is diffused through the air, And with thy breath enters into thy midst. He is mingled with the light, And enters, when thou seest, into thy eyes. He is mingled with thy spirit, And examines thee from within, as to what thou art. In thy soul He dwells ...” Ephrem here represents God as the water, and all creatures as sea creatures. Just like the sea, God both contains and transcends his creatures. He is not only over all things, but also in and around and embracing all things. The separation implied in Divine transcendence never nullifies the unity implied in Divine immanence.

St. Dionysius the Areopagite

St. Dionysius the Areopagite lived in the late fifth or early sixth century. He was a great Christian neoplatonic philosopher, ascetic and speculative genius. Dionysius completes the picture or world-image of the traditional Christian cosmology. His most important contribution is undoubtedly his concept of hierarchy in the cosmos. Dionysius is, as far as we know, the first person in literature ever to have used the word ‘hierarchy’. He seems to have coined the term. This profoundly Orthodox Christian concept is vital for a conception of the cosmos that includes not only the beings and activities of the visible world but also the ‘invisible’ world; beings and activity of the subtle, celestial or angelic worlds, not susceptible of scientific measurement, yet part of the order of created nature. “A hierarchy is a sacred order, a state of understanding and an activity approximating as closely as possible to the Divine.”[7] What does Dionysius mean by “approximating as closely as possible to the Divine”? His very next sentence gives the explanation: “It is uplifted to the imitation of God in proportion to the enlightenments divinely given to it.” According to Dionysius, then, the order, understanding and activity of the hierarchically-ordered cosmos is the sanctifying beauty of the Divine image, revealed simultaneously in the being, in the knowing of and in the activity of the hierarchy. A hierarchy, then, contrary to the popular Church notion, is not a ‘chain of command’; or an organisational chart representing a system of authority that is imposed from above upon a mass of individuals who are not part of the authority structure. To Dionysius, the sacred concept of hierarchy applied not only to the world of angels but to the world of visible nature. To quote

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from his treatise on the Church, the priesthood and the sacraments, *The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*: “We have a venerable sacred tradition which asserts that every hierarchy is the complete expression of the sacred elements comprised within it. It is the perfect total of all its sacred constituents. Our own hierarchy is therefore said to embrace every one of its sacred constituents. Talk of ‘hierarchy’ and one is referring to a holy and inspired man, someone who understands all sacred knowledge, someone in whom an entire hierarchy is completely perfected and known.” In other words, the created order itself— the universe— in the Dionysian conception, is a God-given means of fulfilment, salvation and transfiguration for all its constituent parts or members. This is to say that human beings cannot be ‘saved’ without ‘saving’ the Creation. In Orthodox Christian terms, without the transfiguration of the cosmos, there is no ‘deification’ of human beings. Central to this, is the crucial insight that the purpose of the created order is “to enable beings to be as like as possible to God and to be at one with Him.” In the understanding of the ancient Church, the universe, far from being either an illusion or a vast mindless material force, is a Divine revelation and a sacred means of salvation, enlightenment and ‘at-one-ment’.

Chapter Four

3. God’s Natural Law, The Manners and the Order of Creation

Hundreds of years later, Christianity emerged as the dominant religion in the Roman Empire. The fathers of the early Christian Church introduced a way of explaining the world far different from that of Aristotle. Perhaps the most important of these early church fathers was St. Augustine.

Augustine was born in A.D. 354 in North Africa, then a province of Rome. As a youth, he studied the concepts of natural law and human reason from the writings of classic Greek and Roman thinkers like Aristotle and Cicero. Augustine converted to Christianity when he was 33.

He became a Christian priest and bishop of the North African city of Hippo. For a while, he believed reason and faith were compatible. By the year 400, however, he had changed his mind.

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"Do not therefore try to understand in order that you may believe," he wrote, "but believe in order that you may understand."

Augustine taught that when Adam and Eve put their own desires above God's will, they committed a sin that became the source of evil among human beings. Christians often call this "original sin." Augustine believed that all human beings were born with original sin and were thus doomed to damnation. But like other Christians, he also believed that God was merciful and sent Jesus to save believers from sin and eternal suffering.

Even so, Augustine viewed humans as essentially sinful. Only some of them would escape from the fires of hell. These individuals, known only to God, would achieve heavenly bliss in what Augustine called the "City of God." Membership in the Christian (Roman Catholic) church was essential, he wrote, but even that did not guarantee salvation.

Because of Adam and Eve's sinfulness, government was needed to control and punish sinful humans. Augustine said that government forms were not important since they were all temporary.

Augustine argued that people should obey their rulers unless they violated God's word. In that case, believers could refuse to obey, but must expect punishment. In general, though, he advised that it was better to endure a wicked state during one's brief existence on Earth, having faith that eternal life awaited in the City of God.

Natural laws are hierarchical in nature; secondary laws of nature are based on primary laws of nature, which have to be just right in order for our universe to be possible. But, where did these laws come from, and why do they exist? If the universe were merely the accidental by-product of a big bang, then why should it obey orderly principles or any principles at all for that matter? Such laws are consistent with biblical creation. Natural laws exist because the universe has a Creator God who is logical and has imposed order on His universe (Genesis 1:1).

The Word of God

Everything in the universe, every plant and animal, every rock, every particle of matter or light wave, is bound by laws which it has no choice but to obey. The Bible tells us that there are laws

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of nature—“ordinances of heaven and earth” (*Jeremiah 33:25*). These laws describe the way God normally accomplishes His will in the universe.

God’s logic is built into the universe, and so the universe is not random or arbitrary. It obeys laws of chemistry that are logically derived from the laws of physics, many of which can be logically derived from other laws of physics and laws of mathematics. The most fundamental laws of nature exist only because God wills them to; they are the logical, orderly way that the Lord upholds and sustains the universe He has created. The atheist is unable to account for the logical, orderly state of the universe. Why should the universe obey laws if there is no law-giver? But laws of nature are perfectly consistent with biblical creation. In fact, the Bible is the foundation for natural laws.

The Law of Life (Biogenesis)

There is one well-known law of life: the law of biogenesis. This law states simply that life always comes from life. This is what observational science tells us: organisms reproduce other organisms after their own kind. Historically, Louis Pasteur disproved one alleged case of spontaneous generation; he showed that life comes from previous life. Since then, we have seen that this law is universal—with no known exceptions. This is, of course, exactly what we would expect from the Bible. According to Genesis 1, God supernaturally created the first diverse kinds of life on earth and made them to reproduce after their kind. Notice that molecules-to-man evolution violates the law of biogenesis. Evolutionists believe that life (at least once) spontaneously formed from nonliving chemicals. But this is inconsistent with the law of biogenesis. Real science confirms the Bible.

Everything in the universe, every plant and animal, every rock, every particle of matter or light wave, is bound by laws which it has no choice but to obey.

The Laws of Chemistry

Life requires a specific chemistry. Our bodies are powered by chemical reactions and depend on the laws of chemistry operating in a uniform fashion. Even the information that makes up any living being is stored on a long molecule called DNA. Life as we know it would not be possible if the laws of chemistry were different. God created the laws of chemistry in just the right way so that life would be possible.

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The laws of chemistry give different properties to the various elements (each made of one type of atom) and compounds (made up of two or more types of atoms that are bonded together) in the universe. For example, when given sufficient activation energy, the lightest element (hydrogen) will react with oxygen to form water. Water itself has some interesting properties, such as the ability to hold an unusually large amount of heat energy. When frozen, water forms crystals with six-sided symmetry (which is why snowflakes are generally six-sided). Contrast this with salt (sodium chloride) crystals, which tend to form cubes. It is the six-fold symmetry of water ice that causes “holes” in its crystal, making it less dense than its own liquid. That’s why ice floats in water (whereas essentially all other frozen compounds sink in their own liquid).

The properties of elements and compounds are not arbitrary. In fact, the elements can be logically organized into a periodic table based on their physical properties. Substances in the same column on the table tend to have similar properties. This follows because elements in a vertical column have the same outer electron structures. These outermost electrons determine the physical characteristics of the atom. The periodic table did not happen by chance. Atoms and molecules have their various properties because their electrons are bound by the laws of quantum physics. In other words, chemistry is based on physics. If the laws of quantum physics were just a bit different, atoms might not even be possible. God designed the laws of physics just right so that the laws of chemistry would come out the way He wanted them to.

The Laws of Planetary Motion

The creation scientist Johannes Kepler discovered that the planets in our solar system obey three laws of nature. He found that planets orbit in ellipses (not perfect circles as had been previously thought) with the sun at one focus of the ellipse; thus a given planet is sometimes closer to the sun than at other times. Kepler also found that planets sweep out equal areas in equal times—in other words, planets speed up as they get closer to the sun within their orbit. And third, Kepler found the exact mathematical relationship between a planet’s distance from the sun (a) and its orbital period (p); planets that are farther from the sun take much longer to orbit than planets that

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are closer (expressed as $p^2=a^3$). Kepler's laws also apply to the orbits of moons around a given planet.¹⁵

As with the laws of chemistry, these laws of planetary motion are not fundamental. Rather, they are the logical derivation of other laws of nature. In fact, it was another creation scientist (Sir Isaac Newton) who discovered that Kepler's laws could be derived mathematically from certain laws of physics—specifically, the laws of gravity and motion (which Newton himself formulated).

The Laws of Physics

The field of physics describes the behavior of the universe at its most fundamental level. There are many different laws of physics. They describe the way the universe operates today. Some laws of physics describe how light propagates, how energy is transported, how gravity operates, how mass moves through space, and many other phenomena. The laws of physics are usually mathematical in nature; some laws of physics can be described with a concise formula, such as $E=mc^2$. The simple formula $F=ma$ shows how an object with mass (m) will accelerate (a) when a net force (F) is applied to it. It is amazing that every object in the universe consistently obeys these rules.

There is a hierarchy in physics: some laws of physics can be derived from other laws of physics. For example, Einstein's famous formula $E=mc^2$ can be derived from the principles and equations of special relativity. Conversely, there are many laws of physics that cannot be derived from other laws of physics; many of these are suspected to be derivative principles, but scientists have not yet deduced their derivation.

And some laws of physics may be truly fundamental (not based on other laws); they exist only because God wills them to. In fact, this must be the case for at least one law of physics (and perhaps several)—the most fundamental. (Logically, this is because if the most fundamental law were based on some other law, it would not be the most fundamental law.)

 <https://solarsystem.nasa.gov › orbits-and-keplers-laws>

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The laws of physics (along with their associated constants) are fine-tuned in just the right way so that life, particularly human life, is possible. This fact is called the “anthropic principle.”¹

¹*Anthropic* comes from the Greek word for man, *anthropos*.

The Laws of Mathematics

Notice that the laws of physics are highly mathematical in nature. They would not work if there were not also laws of mathematics. Mathematical laws and principles include the rules of addition, the transitive property, the commutative properties of addition and multiplication, the binomial theorem, and many others. Like the laws of physics, some laws and properties of mathematics can be derived from other mathematical principles. But unlike the laws of physics, the laws of mathematics are abstract; they are not “attached” to any specific part of the universe. It is possible to imagine a universe where the laws of physics are different, but it is difficult to imagine a (consistent) universe where the laws of mathematics are different.²

The laws of mathematics are an example of a “transcendent truth.” They must be true regardless of what kind of universe God created. This may be because God’s nature is logical and mathematical; thus, any universe He chose to create would necessarily be mathematical in nature. The secular naturalist cannot account for the laws of mathematics. Certainly he would believe in mathematics and would use mathematics, but he is unable to account for the existence of mathematics within a naturalistic framework since mathematics is not a part of the physical universe. However, the Christian understands that there is a God beyond the universe and that mathematics reflects the thoughts of the Lord. Understanding math is, in a sense, “thinking God’s thoughts after Him”³ (though in a limited, finite way, of course).

Some have supposed that mathematics is a human invention. It is said that if human history had been different, an entirely different form of math would have been constructed—one with alternate laws, theorems, axioms, etc. But such thinking is not consistent. Are we to believe that the universe did not obey mathematical laws before people discovered them? Did the planets orbit differently before Kepler discovered that $p^2=a^3$? Clearly, mathematical laws are something that human beings have discovered, not invented. The only thing that might have been different (had human history taken a different course) is the notation—the way in which we choose to

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express mathematical truths through symbols. But these truths exist regardless of how they are expressed. Mathematics could rightly be called the “language of creation.”

The Laws of Logic

All the laws of nature, from physics and chemistry to the law of biogenesis, depend on the laws of logic. Like mathematics, the laws of logic are transcendent truths. We cannot imagine that the laws of logic could be anything different from what they are. Take the law of noncontradiction for example. This law states that you cannot have both “A” and “not A” at the same time and in the same relationship. Without the laws of logic, reasoning would be impossible. But where do the laws of logic come from?

The atheist cannot account for the laws of logic, even though he or she must accept that they exist in order to do any rational thinking. But according to the Bible, God is logical. Indeed, the law of noncontradiction reflects God’s nature; God cannot lie (*Numbers 23:19*) or be tempted with evil (*James 1:13*) since these things contradict His perfect nature. Since we have been made in God’s image, we instinctively know the laws of logic. We are able to reason logically (though because of finite minds and sin we don’t always think entirely logically).

The Uniformity of Nature

The laws of nature are uniform. They do not (arbitrarily) change, and they apply throughout the whole cosmos. The laws of nature apply in the future just as they have applied in the past; this is one of the most basic assumptions in all of science. Without this assumption, science would be impossible. If the laws of nature suddenly and arbitrarily changed tomorrow, then past experimental results would tell us nothing about the future. Why is it that we can depend on the laws of nature to apply consistently throughout time? The secular scientists cannot justify this important assumption. But the Christian can because the Bible gives us the answer. God is Lord over all creation and sustains the universe in a consistent and logical way. God does not change, and so He upholds the universe in a consistent, uniform way throughout time (*Jeremiah 33:25*).

We have seen that the laws of nature depend on other laws of nature, which ultimately depend on God’s will. Thus, God created the laws of physics in just the right way so that the laws of chemistry would be correct, so that life can exist. It is doubtful that any human would have been able to solve such a complex puzzle. Yet, the Lord has done so. The atheist cannot account for

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these laws of nature (even though he agrees that they must exist), for such laws are inconsistent with naturalism. Yet, they are perfectly consistent with the Bible. We expect the universe to be organized in a logical, orderly fashion and to obey uniform laws because the universe was created by the power of God.

God (Yahweh) is the **Creator** In the beginning He created everything to reflect his will, His power, and His purpose Everything that He created is “**good**” **Good-** appropriate to purpose, function, or genre. Beautiful, orderly, fitting The **Created Order** reflects **justice** and **righteousness**

There is an order to creation because it reflects God’s nature There are two aspects to the **created order**. One aspect of the created order is the **natural order** The other aspect of the created order is the **social order** God assigned angelic powers to operate both aspects of the created order God has assigned a hierarchy of angelic powers to control the natural order God has also assigned angelic powers to control the social order There is a hierarchy of angelic powers (*kosmos*) Fallen angels are demons

The **natural order** is composed of every physical aspect of reality. The **natural order** includes the laws of physics and chemistry. The **natural order** also includes the realm of plants and animals (biology). Scripture shows angels controlling the wind, lightning, fire and other forces of the **natural order**.

St Thomas Aquinas combined the theology of Augustine with the philosophy of Aristotle. He argued that the natural law is in accordance with the 10 commandments. He also argued that civil law should be based on natural law. Natural law is part of the eternal law of God Civil law is only temporal and established by man

As man depends absolutely upon his maker for everything, it is necessary that he should in all points conform to his maker’s will. This will of his maker is called the law of nature. For as God, when he created matter, and endued it with a principle of mobility, established certain rules for the perpetual direction of that motion; so, when he created man, and endued him with freewill to conduct himself in all parts of life, he laid down certain immutable laws

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of human nature, whereby that freewill is in some degree regulated and restrained, and gave him also the faculty of reason to discover the purpose of those laws.

Chapter Five

4. Day One- Sunday Its Mysterious teaching.

On the first day of creation, you might think God created light. In Genesis 1:3, it seems so. “God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light.” However, in 1 John 1:5, we read how “God *is* light.” God began the creation process of the universe by extending Himself, by sending his energy out. Everything that exists is made of light, including water, and scientists confirm that the universe is still expanding at the speed of light. On the first day, he separated the light from the dark creating day and night.

- The first of every month was a new moon Sabbath with the Seventh New Moon being a special Sabbath called the Feast of Trumpets (see below). (Numb. 28:11-15; 29:1-6; Lev. 23:23-25).
- Nisan 15 - the first day of the feast of unleavened bread was a Sabbath. (Lev. 23:6-7; John 19:31)
- Nisan 16 - the feast of first fruits was not a Sabbath until the New Testament declared it to be so at Christ’s resurrection. When the Gospels, Acts, and Corinthians refer to a “first day Sabbath” they are not referring to a Jewish “first day Sabbath,” although those did occur in connection with other holidays. (Lev. 23:10ff). All the Jewish Sabbaths have been abolished (Col. 2:16) to make room for the new day that the Lord has made.
- Nisan 22 - the seventh day of the feast of unleavened bread was a Sabbath (Numb. 28:17-25).
- Sivan 6 - Pentecost was a Sabbath. In this year (as in the year of Christ’s crucifixion) it falls on Sunday (Lev. 23:15-22).
- Tishri 1 - the Feast of Trumpets was a Sabbath (Lev. 23:24; Numb. 29:1).
- Tishri 8 - the last day of the Feast of Trumpets was also a Sabbath (Lev. 23:36,39). Leviticus 23:39 actually uses the phrases “first day Sabbath” and “eighth day Sabbath.”
- Tishri 10 is the Day of Atonement (see Lev. 23:27-32).
- Tishri 15 - the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles was a Sabbath (Lev. 23:34-38).

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- Tishri 21 - the 7th day of tabernacles was a Sabbath (Lev. 23:34-38).

What is of great significance for the New Testament however is that a **new Sabbath** was created in the Gospels. For the first time in history, the third day of the Passover festival (sometimes called Firstfruits⁵) was referred to as a Sabbath day in each Gospel (Matt 28:1; Mark 16:2; Luke 24:1; John 20:1). Never before had this been done because work was previously mandated on that day – threshing the green firstfruits harvest. To the Jews, the obvious creation of a new Sabbath day could not have been avoided. In each Gospel account there was a bold declaration that something new had come – indeed, that all things were beginning to be made new. No doubt this is why there was no controversy surrounding the church’s worship being on Sunday. If God had not authorized Sunday as a Sabbath day, the Christian Jews would have strenuously objected to substituting the days of worship. Later in the paper we will examine how this change of days was anticipated in the Old Testament, and why a “Berean” who searched the Old Testament would have been able to see that these things were so. This change from seventh day to first day was no surprise. It was the natural result of the coming of the Messiah.

The Sabbath Principle Shown to be an Abiding Principle

The Sabbath is a creation ordinance (Genesis 2:3)

Since the other creation ordinances of labor (Gen. 2:15), marriage (Gen. 2:24-25) and fruitfulness (Gen. 1:28), have abiding significance for all mankind, one would expect the same of the Sabbath. This appears to be Christ’s interpretation when He declares that the Sabbath was made for mankind (Mark 2:27). Set in the context of creation (man not being made for the Sabbath, but the Sabbath being made for man), Christ seems to agree that the Sabbath was observed as a creation ordinance when mankind was made. If this is true, then all attempts to treat the Sabbath as an institution unique to Israel are eliminated.

Gentiles are repeatedly commanded to keep the Sabbath

(Exodus 20:10; Deut. 5:14; Numb. 15:30-36; Neh. 13:16 in context of 15-22; Isaiah 56:1-8; 66:23). Evidence of Sabbath observance prior to the formation of Israel can be seen in the fact that Cain and Abel offered their sacrifices at the end of the week (literal Hebrew of Gen. 4:3 is “at the end of the days”). Likewise, time was divided up into “weeks” (Gen. 29:27-28) or periods

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of “seven days” (Gen. 7:10; 8:10,12) long before Israel came on the scene. This is why Israel observed the Sabbath before the Ten Commandments were written on stone (see Ex. 16:23,25-26,29). The evidence for this being a moral precept binding on all men is strong.

It is one of the “Ten Commandments” (Exodus 20)

These commandments were written by the very finger of God to show their importance and they were written on stone to show their abiding validity. God’s law is always summarized as “Ten Commandments” (Ex. 34:28; Deut. 4:13; 10:4), not as nine. It is arbitrary to chisel one of the commandments out of the stone on which they were written.

Explicitly called an everlasting or perpetual statute (Exodus 31:16-17)

This is because it is a sign of the everlasting covenant (Ezek. 20:12,20; Is. 55:3 with 56:1-8; Ex. 31:16-17).

We are commanded to worship God on the Sabbath

Lev. 23:3; cf. e.g. 2 Kings 4:23; and Christ’s habit of meeting on the seventh day with God’s people (Mark 6:2; Luke 4:16) which habit we will see was transferred to the first day of the week after the resurrection.

Sabbath command to labor for six days

If the fourth commandment has been thrown out as some allege, how can the Ten Commandments summarize all the law? (cf. 2 Thes. 3:6-15, etc. for this side of the commandment.)

New Testament continuation

“There remains therefore a Sabbath observance⁶ for the people of God” (Heb. 4:9). Far from being abolished, the Bible says it “remains.”

Old Testament prophesy

The Old Testament prophesied that in New Testament times Gentiles would honor the Sabbath (Isa. 56:1-8) and that eventually “‘from one Sabbath to another, *all flesh* shall come to worship before Me,’ says the Lord” (Isaiah 66:23, emphasis added). There is no time period prior to the

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resurrection of Jesus Christ that this statement could have been fulfilled. It applies to Gentiles in our era.

Christ taught proper observance of the Sabbath

(Matt. 12:1-14; Mark 2:23-3:6; Luke 13:10-17; 14:1-6; John 7:22-24). In these passages Christ does not overturn the Old Testament. Instead, He uses the Old Testament to justify His actions and to overturn the false interpretations and additions imposed by the Pharisees.

Christ's prophesy for the Great Tribulation

He said that there would still be a Sabbath that true Christians ought to be concerned about (Matt. 24:20). Whatever interpretation of prophecy one might have, this is clearly in the New Covenant era.

Revelation 1:10

This verse indicates that there is still a day of the week that is set apart as belonging to the Lord and is called "the Lord's day."

If Scripture teaches that the Sabbath is a permanent moral law, it would require specific information from the Lord to authorize any change in the day. It is to that subject that we now turn.

3. Historical Changes In the Sabbath

Summary

Before the Fall of Adam and Eve into sin, mankind was supposed to **start** his week with a Sabbath. After the Fall, God commanded man to **end** His week with a Sabbath. This is charted out below.

The Paradise rest which God provided and which was symbolized in the Sabbath was forfeited by man's disobedience and would only be restored again by the second Adam's future obedience. In Christ, the day for the Sabbath is restored to its creation place and man can once again rest in God's finished work of re-creation and redemption before He goes forth in obedience to the Lord.

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Detailed analysis

According to Exodus 20:11 all seven days of God's creation week were to be a model for man's dominion and rest. The order of activities on each of the days is instructive for our own dominion activities. In this book, however, we will only focus on days six and seven.

Day six of creation (the day of preparation)

One facet of dominion that was commanded on day six was to prepare for the Sabbath (Ex. 16:22-30). This day was called "the day of Preparation" (Matt. 27:62), "Preparation Day" (Mark 15:42; John 19:14,31,42) or simply "the Preparation" (Luke 23:54). On this day all necessary work was done ahead of time to enable worship on the Sabbath. In the original creation week God's preparations included preparing a home (Eden) and a community (Eve) in which to worship. God deliberately created Adam (as the head of the home) prior to those two preparations, perhaps as a form of teaching.

Day Seven of God's Week is Day One of Man's Week

The days of creation are all counted from evening to evening. By our Western method of counting, day six started on Friday night and finished Saturday night at 6pm. The exact wording for each day is interesting. It says, "The **evening and the morning** were the first day" (1:5, emphasis added), etc. Adam had not experienced the evening of day six, and maybe not even the morning. Certainly Eve did not experience anything but a short period at the end of day six. This conclusion is reached from the following information. The order of events on day six were a) creation of land creatures (1:24-25), b) creation of Adam (2:7), c) creation of the garden (2:8), d) instructions to man (2:15-17), e) bringing animals before Adam to be named, but also to create a desire for him to have his own mate (2:18-20), f) creation of Eve (2:21-25), g) instructions (1:28-30) and h) ending the day with the declaration that it was "very good" (1:31). If Genesis 1:29-31 is compared with the time span of 2:7-22, it becomes evident that Eve was created toward the end of day six, just in time to hear God's blessings and commands in 1:28-31 and the ushering in of the Sabbath.

Thus mankind's first full day was God's Sabbath day. Day seven of God's week (as defined by "evening and morning") was mankind's first day (as defined by "evening and morning"). This can be diagrammed as follows:

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Why did God have mankind start their week with a rest rather than end it with a rest as God did? Because God intended man on every level to demonstrate a commitment to the Creator/creature distinction. Man must not play God by taking dominion in his own wisdom. Instead, God intended man to start his week by bowing to God and listening to God on the Sabbath. It is only as man rests in God's finished work of creation that he will be in a position to take godly, dependent, and humble dominion of his own.

Adam's Rebellion Against God's Sabbath Rest

Adam rebelled against God's design. He sought to start his week independent of God rather than dependent in worship. When God came to meet with His people in a visible form "walking in the garden in the cool of the day" (3:8), He found that they rebelled against His purpose for both Sabbath and dominion. They had bought into Satan's lie that "you will be like God" (3:5). They had submitted to a wisdom alien to God's, had sought to take dominion independently of Him, and had worshipped and served the creation rather than the Creator. Adam, by his decision, had destroyed the whole purpose and character of the Sabbath and in doing so had made dominion into a demonic activity.

God Shows Mercy, but Rubs Adam's Face in the Sabbath he Disdained

Praise the Lord! God did not make all rest and dominion impossible for Adam and Eve by throwing them into hell. It's true, there **was** cursing of both Adam's dominion and his rest, but there was also redemption and blessing found along with the curse. Genesis 3:15 prophesies of the coming of Jesus who would destroy the works of the devil. Apart from the coming of Jesus, the promise of rest in the Sabbath would have been false and the Sabbath would have ceased to be a meaningful command. So God placed the time for worship at the end of the week. In effect God told Adam, "So you want to be like God!? So you want to start your week with dominion rather than rest!?? I will let you do so. In fact, to show how miserable all dominion can be apart from grace I will **command** you to do as I did. From this point on you must begin your week with dominion and only after long and hard striving will I give you rest. The fact that there still is rest is a promise that one day at the end of this age, the promised Messiah will bring true rest. He, as the Second Adam, will accomplish what you failed to." So the Sabbath was no longer

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celebrated at the beginning of the week, but at the end of the week. The rest was cursed⁷ as well as the dominion.

This can be diagrammed as follows:

Until the time of Jesus, mankind is commanded to imitate God to show how impossible it is for us to play God. From this point on, worship was at the end of the week. This is the literal meaning of Genesis 4:2. When Cain and Abel bring their sacrifices before God, it is said to be at the end of the week, or as the margin says literally, “at the end of the days.” We have hints in Noah of this same pattern. Again we have hints in the patriarchs that they kept a seventh day Sabbath. In Exodus 16, before Israel even gets to Sinai and before the law is given, they observe the Sabbath on the seventh day. The law at Sinai condemns, but it also gives hope in a future Messiah. The New Testament uses this Sabbath imagery not only to speak of the bondage symbolized in pre-resurrection Sabbath observance, but also the liberty and grace in the change of the day.

Failure to Observe a First Day Sabbath Ignores Christ’s Finished Work

In the Old Covenant, while the seventh day Sabbath was a reminder of man’s inability, it was also a gracious promise of what Christ would do. It symbolized that what is impossible for those in the First Adam, the Second Adam accomplishes. Because Jesus is both God and man, He can satisfy the demand of the law. Christ kept all the demands of the previous covenants and was also punished for “the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance” (Heb. 9:15). By His redemption He made a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17-19; Rom. 8:19-25) and entered His rest (Heb. 4:10). He again gave us the pledge of the first day Sabbath (see below) which held out the promise of our consummation state as we labor for Christ’s kingdom and seek to “subdue all things” (Heb. 2:5-8). Since we are sinners, this would also be an impossible request, so Christ not only enters His rest as God, but as our representative Second Adam He labors to subdue all things to Himself on our behalf (Heb. 1:13; 2:8-18). Before we can subdue the world to King Jesus, we must ***first*** rest in His finished work of redemption.

To fail to start our week with rest (on Sunday) is to make the same mistake that Adam made. When Adam broke the first Sabbath by taking his own dominion and looking to another source

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for wisdom, he forgot that God had already provided everything that he needed for life and godliness. It is true that after the fall, men had to look forward to a new provision that had not yet come (Jesus). Now that Jesus has come, it is an insult to His grace to continue to celebrate a seventh day Sabbath as if He has not come. Colossians 2:11-17 tells us that to continue to observe Jewish days (all of which looked forward to Jesus) is to submit to bondage and frustration in the same way that religious observance of circumcision does. Circumcision was a blessing in the Old Covenant because it pointed to Jesus, but once Jesus has come, to get circumcised insults Christ's finished work. In the same way, Paul says "Let no one judge you ... [with respect to] sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ" (vv. 16-17). The rest of this book proves that there truly is a "first day Sabbath" which has been restored to God's people. Because of Christ's resurrection on Easter Sunday we have been given new power to take dominion as we are supposed to. To ignore or violate the Sabbath is to try to take dominion in our own strength and in our own way.

The Change to "First Day Sabbath" Hinted at in the Old Testament

Isaiah 65-66 anticipates the time when all things will be made new as a result of Christ's incarnation (66:7-9). This includes ultimately a new heavens and earth (65:17), but prior to that time there will be changes in God's people (65:18-19), changes in the extent of Deuteronomy 28 type blessings (65:20-25), and even changes in worship (66:1-4) and church government (66:18-21). If priests and Levites in the new covenant will no longer be from the tribe of Levi but will be from the Gentiles (66:21), then it should be no surprise to us that the Sabbath is included in the "new" things when "from one Sabbath to another, all flesh shall come to worship before" God (66:23). Both chapters anticipate radical changes in Christ's making all things new.

This new covenant creation was anticipated in the Old Testament feast days by the "eighth day Sabbath" which pointed figuratively to Christ (cf. e.g. Lev. 23:39). What is the eighth day? Sunday. This "eighth day" concept occurs repeatedly in the festivals (Lev. 23:5,10ff,15ff,34-36,39).

This new creation was anticipated by the Jubilee year which was the year after the seventh seven. Christ declared Himself to be the fulfillment of the Jubilee (Luke 4:19). Every Sunday is the day after the seventh – a miniature jubilee if you will.

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This new creation is recognized to be a new “day which the LORD has made” (Psalm 118:24); namely the resurrection day when Christ entered His rest. This resurrection “day” fulfills in the new creation the function that the old day “made” by God had: it is set apart as His day (Rev. 1:10). This is why Hebrews 4:8 indicates that when Psalm 95 is referring to “another day” (namely the resurrection) it signifies that “there remains therefore a Sabbath rest for the people of God” (Heb. 4:10).

In light of Peter’s exposition of Psalm 118 in Acts 4:10-12, it appears reasonable that when Psalm 118:24 says, “this is the day that the LORD has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it,” it is a reference not just to Christ’s resurrection, but the making of a new day of our weekly celebration. It does apply at least to the resurrection of Christ, but it appears to be an ongoing day of celebration.

4. Christ’s Resurrection Establishes a New First Day Sabbath

After the resurrection, and only after the resurrection, is worship performed corporately on a weekly basis on the first day of the week. The Gospels authorize the change by indicating in their accounts of the Sabbath that there was now a “first day Sabbath.” Since the English translations tend to obscure this point that has been made by Sabbatarian commentators, I will give you the Greek, a literal rendering into English, and two other possible translations offered by Greek scholars. Note especially the form of the word “Sabbath,” and compare that form with the Jewish Sabbath of Exodus 20, Colossians 2:16, and Matthew 28:1.

The Greek form of the fourth commandment

Μνησθητι την ἡμέραν τῶν *σαββάτων* ἁγιαζειν αὐτήν. (Ex. 20:8)

Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. (Ex. 20:8)

Jewish Sabbath abolished along with all other Old Testament and Old World days

Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. [*σαββάτων*] (Col. 2:16 in ESV).

This verse together with verse 17 shows that the Old Covenant Sabbath is no longer binding since it pointed forward to Christ. Paul removes all Old Covenant holy days that pointed to Christ and the New Testament replaces them with one holy day that points back to Christ. But

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this issue of judgment shows that certain days are no longer binding. Later we will see that there is a New Covenant day that is binding.

Resurrection accounts that bring in a new Sabbath

Matthew 28:1

Ὅψε δε *σαββάτων* τη ἐπιφωσκειση εἰς μίαν *σαββάτων*,

Note: The same word *σαββάτων* in the same context using the same grammar should have the same translation. It is arbitrary to translate this word as “Sabbath” in the first phrase and as “first day of the week” in the second phrase.

NKJV: Now after the *Sabbath*, as *the first [day] of the week* began to dawn.

Literal: Now after the *Sabbath*, as *the first [day] Sabbath* began to dawn.

Translation of Johns D. Parker, Cranmer and some other Greek scholars: Now after the *Sabbath*; towards *one of the Sabbaths* (He gives the same translation for the other “first day Sabbath” passages given below. We will shortly show how grammatically it is impossible to take this as anything but a singular Sabbath because of the singular feminine modifier *μία* that implies the word “day.”)

Youngs: And on the eve of the *sabbaths*, at the dawn, toward the *first of the sabbaths* (Similar for other Gospel accounts.)⁸

Before we move on to other examples in the New Testament, I want to comment on why “first day Sabbath” is the most natural rendering of the Greek.

First, this was the way Jews translated the Hebrew for the Sabbath into Greek. For those who think that the genitive should be translated with an “of,” it should be noted that the *usual* case for Sabbath is the genitive since its original meaning was “of rest,” (i.e. a day of rest). Thus τῶν σαββάτων in Exodus 20 is simply “the Sabbath” and Ὅψε δε σαββάτων is simply “and after the Sabbath.” Likewise, the singular day “Sabbath” is *usually* in the plural. This can be seen by even a casual glance through a Greek concordance.

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Why does the translation have to change when the form is the same for both words in Matthew 28:1? While it is possible to paraphrase σαββάτων as “week,” there is only one Biblical text where such a paraphrase would be helpful (Luke 18:12) and that is simply because “I fast twice since the Sabbath” would be too wooden for an English translation.

Interestingly, only one extra Biblical citation is given by BAGD as warranting such a paraphrase. The usual term for “week” is ἑβδομας. Just for the sake of argument, if indeed it is an extremely rare form for “week,” it would seem curious to me that such a rare form would find its way into all four Gospel accounts, be used by Greek speaking Luke, and be used by Paul when ἑβδομας would have been the expected form for “week.” The Sunday Sabbatarian translation is really to be preferred.

Second, the grammar calls for it. Keep in mind that μίαν (“first”) is in the feminine singular accusative whereas σαββάτων (Sabbath) is neuter plural genitive (just as in the Greek form of the fourth commandment – see above). Therefore, it is clear that μίαν does not modify σαββάτων, but rather it modifies the implied word “day.” This construction occurs several times in the LXX. Therefore, it is grammatically impossible to translate it as “one of the sabbaths.” It has to be “first day sabbath.”

Third, the ancient translations translate it as “first day Sabbath.”⁹

A listing of other occurrences of “first day Sabbath” in the New Testament helps to make the previous points clear.

Mark 16:1-2,9

Και διαγενομένου τοῦ **σαββάτου**, Μαρία, ... και; λίαν πρωῒ τῆς μιᾶς **σαββάτων** ἐρχονται ἐπὶ; το; μνημεῖον, ἀνατέλαντος τοῦ ἡλίου... Ἀναστάς δε πρῶ πρωῒ **σαββάτου**

Notice that this second form of the word “Sabbath” is also used for both Saturday and Sunday.

NKJV: Now when the [Jewish] Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome brought spices, that they might come and anoint Him. Very early in the morning, **on the first day of the week**, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen.

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Literal: Now when the Sabbath was past¹⁰ ... Very early in the morning, *on the first day Sabbath*, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen... And rising early on the first day Sabbath.

Luke 24:1

Τῇ δε μιᾷ τῶν *σαββάτων*, ὀφθρου βαθεος, ἦλθον ἐπὶ το μνημα

NKJV: Now *on the first day of the week*, very early the morning, they came to the tomb.

Literal: Now *on the first day Sabbath*, at early dawn, they came to the tomb.

John 20:1

Τῇ δε μια τον *σαββάτων*, Μαρία ἡ Μαγδαληνη; ἐρχεται πρωί σκοτιας ἐτι οὐσης εἰς το μνεῖον

NKJV: Now *on the first day of the week* Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark.

Literal: Now *on the first day Sabbath* Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark.

Early Church celebration

We find Luke and Paul distinguishing between the Sabbath and the first day Sabbath so that there would be no confusion when relating history that occurred where both Sabbaths were being practiced: the seventh day Sabbath by unbelieving Jews and the first day Sabbath by the church.¹¹

Acts 13:42ff

εἰσελθόντες εἰς τὴν συναγωγὴν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῶν σαββάτων, ἐκάθισαν. (Acts 13:14)

They went into the synagogue on the Sabbath and sat down (Acts 13:14)

Ἐξιόντων ᾧ δὲ ᾧ ἐκ τῆς συναγωγῆς τῶν Ἰουδαίων, παρεκάλουν τὰ ἔθνη εἰς τὸ μεταξὺ σάββατον λαληθῆναι αὐτοῖς τὰ ᾧ ῥήματα. (Acts 13:42)

So when the Jews went out of the synagogue, the Gentiles begged that these words might be preached to them the Sabbath in between (τὸ μεταξὺ). (Acts 13:42)

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Acts 13:13-41 show Paul reasoning with the Jews on their Sabbath day in their synagogue. When they rejected the word, Paul gave the same words to them on a Sabbath in between the Jewish Sabbaths. What is that “in between Sabbath”? Rev. Johns D. Parker, Ph.D. explains:

When Paul and Barnabas were at Antioch in Pisidia, on their first missionary tour, we have the most indisputable evidence of the transfer of the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday. Paul first preached to the Jews in their synagogue on the (Jewish) Sabbath, and “when the Jews were gone out of their synagogue [Acts 13:42], the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath” (εἰς το μεταξυ σαββατων in the Sabbath in between), that is, the Sabbath between the (Jewish) Sabbaths. And the narrative continues (Acts 13:44), and the next Sabbath day (τό δε; ἔχομενω σαββατω σχεδον on the following Sabbath just at hand), came almost the whole city together to hear the Word of God. When the participle ἔχομενος is used in reference to place it designates a place that is near or next, as in Mark 1:38 where Christ said “let us go into the next towns” (ἀγωμεν εἰς τας ἔχόμενας κωμοπολεις). When the participle is used in reference to time it designates the next day, as in Acts 21:26, where “Paul took the men, and the next day [τῇ ἐξομενῇ ἡμέρᾳ] purifying himself with them entered into the temple.” The evangelist here says the following Sabbath, (on which the Gentiles would naturally hold religious service), was between the (Jewish) Sabbaths, and near at hand, that is, on Sunday. Can language be framed that would prove the transfer of the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday more clearly and indisputably than this language of the inspired evangelist?¹²

While I believe that Parker is much too dogmatic, his interpretation is at least possible and is included for completeness.

Acts 20:7

(See comments under Revelation 1:10 on the significance of this verse.)

Ἐν δε τῇ μια των **σαββάτων**, συνηγμενων των μαθητων του κλασσαι ἄρτον, ὁ Παυλος διελεγετο αὐτοις

NKJV: Now *on the first day of the week*, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul spoke to them.

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Literal: Now *on the first day Sabbath*, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul spoke to them.

1 Corinthians 16:2

κατα μιαν *σαββάτων* ἕκαστος ὑμῶν ...

NKJV: On the first day of the week, let each of you ...

Literal: On the first day Sabbath, let each of you ...

The context of this verse is also significant:

“Now concerning the collection for the saints, *as I have given orders* to the churches of Galatia, so *you must do also*: On the first day of the week *let each one of you lay something aside*, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come.”

(This is the present active imperative. Imperative shows it to be a command. Present shows it to be continuous.)

This is one of several passages which shows that the New Testament is not against “day keeping.” Notice that Paul wanted the offerings taken on a certain day: the first day Sabbath. The establishment of this day is a command, something the Corinthians must do, and something that was universally mandated for all churches. Many people will use Romans 14, Galatians 4:9-10, and Colossians 2:16-17 to teach that there is no distinction in days in the New Covenant and that day-keeping is not necessary. Not only does such an interpretation contradict this passage, but it does violence to the context of each of those passages. Each of those passages are clearly dealing with the issue of whether the Jewish Sabbath days continue. To make way for the New Covenant Sabbath, the Jewish Sabbaths had to pass away, but those passages do not make every New Covenant day alike.

Seventh Day Adventists have tried to say that this passage is only talking about setting aside some money in the home on each pay day, and that the first day of each week was probably pay day. As Gordon Fee notes, “Deissmann, LAE, p. 361, put forth this suggestion but acknowledged that it had no known support. It seems altogether too modern to have merit.”¹³ Not only does it not have support, but there is much evidence that laborers were paid on a daily basis (see, for

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example, Lev. 19:13 where employers were not allowed to wait till the next day to make payment; see also Matt. 20:1-16). There is no getting around the religious significance of “the first day” no matter how you translate the Greek. Notice, too, that the context indicates that this is an “order to the churches” (v. 1). This is **church** practice in other nations as well (v. 1) that is being addressed, not private charity. Charles Hodge commenting on the phrase “Every one was to lay by himself” (ἐκαστος ὑμῶν παρ’ ἑαυτοῦ τιθέτω, θησαυρίζων) says,

To this interpretation [that it means individuals should store up in their houses] it may be objected that the whole expression is thus obscure and awkward...The words do not mean to lay by at home, but to lay by himself...What he has to do with it, or where he was to deposit it, is not expressed. The word θησαυρίζων means **putting into the treasury**, or **hoarding up**, and is perfectly consistent with the assumption that the place of deposit was some common treasury, and not every man’s house.

If Paul directed this money to be laid up at home, why was the first day of the week selected? It is evident that the first day must have offered some special facility for doing what is here enjoined. The only reason that can be assigned for requiring the thing to be done on the first day of the week, is, that on that day the Christians were accustomed to meet, and what each one had laid aside from his weekly gains could be treasured up, i.e. put into the common treasury of the church.

The end which the apostle desired to accomplish could not otherwise have been effected. He wished that there might be no collections when he came. But if every man had his money laid by at home, the collection would be still to be made. The probability is, therefore, Paul intended to direct the Corinthians to make a collection every Lord’s day for the poor, when they met for worship.¹⁴

Certainly on the other occasions when Paul spoke of this particular offering for Jerusalem it was described in the language of worship and fellowship, not of private charity: “fellowship” (2 Cor. 8:4; 9:13; Rom. 15:26), “service” (2 Cor. 8:4; 9:1,12-13; Rom. 15:31; cf. v. 25), “grace” (2 Cor. 8:4,6-7,9,19), “blessing” (2 Cor. 9:5), and “divine service” (the Greek word is λειτουργία from which we get our word “liturgy.” cf. 2 Cor. 9:12; Rom. 15:27). This was clearly an act of worship in the community of believers.

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Therefore, even if the translation given is not accepted, it is still clear that corporate worship was on Sunday rather than on Saturday, and therefore God's authorized stated worship services are on Sunday and not Saturday. Sunday is the day "sanctified" to Him.

Revelation 1:10

Ἐγενόμην ἐν πνεύματι ἐν τῇ κυριακῇ ἡμέρᾳ·

I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day.

Just as the "Lord's Supper" is a meal that is set aside for the Lord in a way that makes it unique, the "Lord's day" is a day which is set aside for the Lord in a way that makes it special. It is a day that is "sanctified to the Lord."

This is exactly the same Greek syntax as is used to describe the "Lord's Supper" (1 Cor. 11:20). The Lord set aside one supper as belonging to Him in a special way, and since He is "Lord of the Sabbath" (Matt. 12:8), He "made" the day (cf. Ps. 118:24) on which Christ arose to be a day that is set aside as belonging to Him in a special way.

Though it had always been Christ's habit to meet corporately on Saturday (Luke 4:16), He changed that habit so that now the only records we have of His meeting corporately (at least that are dated) are on Sunday.¹⁵ Since Sunday is the Lord's day, it was the day for meeting with Jesus in worship (Mark 16:9,12,14; Luke 24:13-35 compared with John 20:14-17 and 19-23; Luke 24:36-49 compared with John 20:26-29). Pentecost was on a Sunday (compare Lev. 23:15-16 with Acts 2:1ff) and therefore the disciples were "all with one accord in one place" (Acts 2:1). Paul, arriving in Troas on Monday (Acts 20:6) delayed his hurried trip¹⁶ until the following Monday so that he could worship with the church on Sunday (Acts 20:7).

If, as Seventh Day Adventists assert, there was no significance to his meeting on this day, then why does the passage not mention any other meetings in the previous seven days? It was clearly Sunday, not Saturday on which the "disciples came together to break bread" (v. 7). Paul was clearly delaying his rushed trip for a purpose. A conclusion that can be drawn from all of the above is that the Old Testament anticipated another day (Heb. 4:8)¹⁷ and that this resurrection day logically implies that "there remains therefore a Sabbath rest for the people of God" (Heb.

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4:9). This Sabbath will not be taken away until eternity when we are done with our labors and cease from our dominion as God did from His (Heb. 4:10).

The Sabbath, as an everlasting statute (Exodus 31:16-17), will not pass away until heaven and earth pass away. It is a sign of the everlasting covenant (Ezek. 20:12,20; Isa. 55:3 with 56:1-8; Ex. 31:16-17). Like the other two signs of the covenant (which are also “forever”) they change into New Covenant forms: circumcision into baptism, Passover into Lord’s Supper, and seventh day Sabbath into first day Sabbath. The day that belonged to the Lord in the Old Covenant was Saturday (Ex. 20:10) and the day which belongs to the Lord in the New Covenant is Sunday, “the Lord’s day,” commemorating on a weekly basis Easter Sunday (Rev. 1:10).

5. The Early Church Saw Sunday as the Christian Sabbath

Seventh Day Adventists sometimes claim that Sunday observance started with Constantine. Others say that the Pope instituted Sunday in place of Saturday worship. Others more cautiously have suggested that though the church may have worshipped on Sunday, it rested on Saturday and never called Sunday a “rest day.”

This is so clearly wrong that it amazes me how entrenched this mythology has become.

- In AD 100, Barnabas spoke of Sunday as “the Sabbath” which God had made.
- In AD 200, Tertullian said that the church solemnizes Sunday just as Jews solemnize Saturday.
- In AD 220, Origen insisted that on Sundays we must abstain from all work and devote the entire day to worship, readings and private devotions.
- In AD 300, Eusebius called Sunday *“the one and only truly holy day”* in 300 AD.

Indeed, from AD 74 and on, there are so many references to Sunday being treated as a rest day, a “commandment,” a holy day, and as a replacement for Saturday Sabbaths that to continue claims to the contrary is either dishonest or ignorant. It is clear that (with the exception of a small heretical Jewish group known as the Ebionites) the universal practice of the church was to treat Sunday as the authorized holy day of the week. It is clear that they saw Saturday Sabbaths as discontinued and Sunday Sabbath worship as obligatory. The following quotes should help to establish that fact.

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AD 90 — Didache

The following quote demonstrates that:

- The Lord's day (earlier said to be Sunday) is a day for communion

But *every Lord's day*, do ye gather yourselves together, and break bread, and give thanksgiving after having confessed your transgressions, that your sacrifice may be pure. But let no one that is at variance with his fellow come together with you, until they be reconciled, that your sacrifice may not be profaned. For this is that which was spoken by the Lord [Matt. 5:23-24].¹⁸

AD 107 — Ignatius

The following quote demonstrates that:

- The Jewish Sabbath has been replaced by the Lord's Day.
- It is sin to continue to celebrate Saturday as the Sabbath in preference to Sunday, since Sunday alone is the Lord's Day.
- Jews ("those who were brought up in the ancient order of things) who convert to Christianity must observe the Lord's Day, not the Jewish Sabbath.
- Every Christian is obligated to "keep" the Lord's Day.
- Sunday is the chief day of the week.

Be not deceived with strange doctrines, nor with old fables, which are unprofitable. For if we still live according to the Jewish law, we acknowledge that we have not received grace... If, therefore, those who were brought up in the ancient order of things have come to the possession of a new hope, *no longer observing the Sabbath, but living in the observance of the Lord's Day*, on which also our life has sprung up again by Him and by His death (which some deny), through which mystery we received faith, and on account of which we suffer in order that we may be found disciples of Jesus Christ our only teacher, how shall we be able to live apart from him for whom even the prophets were looking as their teacher since they were his disciples in the spirit?... *let every friend of Christ keep the Lord's Day as a festival*, the resurrection-day, the queen and chief of all the days of the week. It is absurd to speak of Jesus Christ with the tongue, and to cherish in the mind a Judaism which has now come to an end. for where there is

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Christianity there cannot be Judaism... These things I address to you, my beloved, not that I know any of you to be in such a state; but, as less than any of you, I desire to guard you beforehand, that ye fall not upon the hooks of vain doctrine, but that you may rather attain to a full assurance in Christ.

AD 110 — Pliny the Younger

The following quote demonstrates that:

- Christians meet “on a fixed day.”
- This day is measured not by Jewish reckoning of evening to evening (i.e., Saturday Sabbath), but from morning worship to evening worship. This is indirect evidence of a Sunday gathering from a pagan.

they were in the habit of meeting *on a certain fixed day* before it was light, when they sang in alternate verses a hymn to Christ, as to a god, and bound themselves by a solemn oath not to (do) any wicked deeds, never to commit any fraud, theft, or adultery, never to falsify their word, nor deny a trust when they should be called upon to deliver it up; after which it was *their custom to separate, and then reassemble* to partake of good food—but food of an ordinary and innocent kind²³

AD 150 — Epistle of the Apostles

The following quote demonstrates that:

- The day belonging to the Lord is said to be the eighth day.

I [Christ] have come into being on the *eighth day which is the day of the Lord.*”

AD 150 — Justin Martyr

The following quotes demonstrate that:

- Keeping Sunday as a holy day is binding. Though we would disagree with Justin’s exegesis to support why the church has rejected the Jewish Sabbath, it is clear that he believes the seventh day Sabbath of the Jews is no longer binding.

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...those who have persecuted and do persecute Christ, if they do not repent, shall not inherit anything on the holy mountain. But the Gentiles, who have believed on Him, and have repented of the sins which they have committed, they shall receive the inheritance along with the patriarchs and the prophets, and the just men who are descended from Jacob, even although they neither keep the Sabbath, nor are circumcised, nor observe the feasts. Assuredly they shall receive the holy inheritance of God.

But if we do not admit this, we shall be liable to fall into foolish opinion, as if it were not the same God who existed in the times of Enoch and all the rest, who neither were circumcised after the flesh, nor observed Sabbaths, nor any other rites, seeing that Moses enjoined such observances... For if there was no need of circumcision before Abraham, or of the observance of Sabbaths, of feasts and sacrifices, before Moses; no more need is there of them now, after that, according to the will of God, Jesus Christ the Son of God has been born without sin, of a virgin sprung from the stock of Abraham.²⁵

There is no other thing for which you blame us, my friends, is there than this? That we do not live according to the Law, nor, are we circumcised in the flesh as your forefathers, nor do we observe the Sabbath as you do.²⁶

(In verse 3 the Jew Trypho acknowledges that Christians ‘do not keep the Sabbath.’)

Quote #2

The following quote demonstrates that:

- Public worship is held on Sunday

But Sunday is the day on which we hold our common assembly, because it is the first day of the week and Jesus our saviour on the same day rose from the dead.²⁷

Quote #3

The following quote demonstrates that:

- Uses Old Testament “eighth day” language to speak of the first day of the week.

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- Sunday is the “first of all days.” If (as many Seventh Day Adventists claim), the early church kept a Saturday Sabbath, there is no way that Justin would call Sunday the first of all days. That implies that it is more holy than and supersedes all other days of the week.

The commandment of circumcision, requiring them always to circumcise the children on the eighth day, was a type of the true circumcision by which we are circumcised from error and evil through the resurrection from the dead on the first day of the week of Jesus Christ our Lord. For the **first day of the week**, although it is the **first of all days**, yet according to the number of the days in a cycle is **called the eighth** (while still remaining the first).²⁸

Quote #4

The following quote demonstrates that:

- Full worship service was held on Sunday
- Christ taught his apostles to worship on Sunday after His resurrection

We are always together with one another. And for all the things with which we are supplied we bless the Maker of all through his Son Jesus Christ and through his Holy Spirit. And on the day called Sunday there is a gathering together in the same place of all who live in a city or a rural district. (There follows an account of a Christian worship service, which is quoted in VII.2.) We all make our assembly in common on the day of the Sun, since it is the first day, on which God changed the darkness and matter and made the world, and Jesus Christ our Savior arose from the dead on the same day. For they crucified him on the day before Saturn’s day, and on the day after (which is the day of the Sun) he appeared to his apostles and taught his disciples these things.²⁹

AD 180 — Acts of Peter

The following quote demonstrates that:

Quote #1

- Jewish Sabbath abolished

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Paul had often contended with the Jewish teachers and had confuted them, saying ‘it is Christ on whom your fathers laid hands. He abolished their Sabbath and fasts and festivals and circumcision.’

Quote #2

The following quote demonstrates that:

- Sunday is a Sabbath
- Sunday is the Lord’s Day

Early in the morning *when the Sabbath dawned*, a multitude from Jerusalem and the surrounding country came to see the scaled sepulchre. In the night in which the Lord’s day dawned, while the soldiers in pairs for each watch were keeping guard, a great voice came from heaven...*Early in the morning of the Lord’s day* Mary Magdalene, a disciple of the Lord...came to the sepulchre.

AD 190 — Clement Of Alexandria

The following quote demonstrates that:

- The Gospel way of keeping the fourth commandment is on the Lord’s Day
- The Lord’s Day is the day Christ rose from the dead (Sunday)

He does the commandment according to the Gospel and *keeps the Lord’s day*, whenever he puts away an evil mind...*glorifying the Lord’s resurrection* in himself.³⁰

AD 200 — Bardesanes

The following quote demonstrates that:

- Assemble on the first day of the week.
- The first day is the only day mandated for assembly (“on *one* day”)

Wherever we are, we are all called after the one name of Christ Christians. On one day, *the first of the week*, we assemble ourselves together.³¹

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AD 200 — Tertullian

The following quote demonstrates that:

Quote #1

- Sunday is compared with the Jewish Sabbath
- Sunday is set apart as a solemn day, whereas Jews solemnize Saturday.

We solemnize the day after Saturday in contradistinction to those who call this day their Sabbath.³²

Quote #2

The following quote demonstrates that:

- Saturday Sabbath days were temporary and abolished

It follows, accordingly, that, in so far as the abolition of carnal circumcision and of the old law is demonstrated as having been consummated at its specific times, so also the observance of the Sabbath is demonstrated to have been temporary.³³

Quote #3

The following quote demonstrates that:

- Don't confuse Sunday worship with worship of sun-god.
- Sunday is our day of joy

Others...suppose that the sun is the god of the Christians, because *it is well-known that we regard Sunday as a day of joy*.³⁴

AD 220 — Origen

The following quote demonstrates that:

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Quote #1

- Sunday is observed by abstaining from all work and devoting the whole day to worship, readings and private devotions

On Sunday none of the actions of the world should be done. If then, you abstain from all the works of this world and keep yourselves free for spiritual things, go to church, listen to the readings and divine homilies, meditate on heavenly things.³⁵

Quote #2

The following quote demonstrates that:

- Sunday is called a rest day.
- It was authorized as a rest day by Christ Himself.

Hence it is not possible that *the [day of] rest after the sabbath* should have come into existence from the seventh [day] of our God. On the contrary, it is our Savior who, after the pattern of his own rest, caused us to be made in the likeness of his death, and hence also of his resurrection.³⁶

AD 225 — Didascalia Apostolorum

The following quote demonstrates that:

- Public worship is commanded on first day of the week.
- This obligation arises by apostolic appointment & by Christ's meeting on the first day of the week.

The apostles further appointed: *On the first day of the week let there be service, and the reading of the Holy Scriptures, and the oblation*, because on the first day of the week our Lord rose from the place of the dead, and on the first day of the week he arose upon the world, and on the first day of the week he ascended up to heaven, and on the first day of the week he will appear at last with the angels of heaven.³⁷

AD 250 — Cyprian

The following quote demonstrates that:

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- The first day = what is called the “eighth day”
- This day is the Lord’s Day

The eighth day, that is, the first day after the Sabbath, and ***the Lord’s Day***.³⁸

AD 300 — Victorinus

The following quote demonstrates that:

- Christ abolished the seventh day Sabbath
- Far from observing the seventh day as a Sabbath, it is proper to make it into a rigorous fast day.

The sixth day is called parasceve, that is to say, the preparation of the kingdom...On this day also, on account of the passion of the Lord Jesus Christ, we make either a station to God or a fast. On the seventh day he rested from all his works, and blessed it, and sanctified it. On the former day we are accustomed to fast rigorously, that on the Lord’s day we may go forth to our bread with giving of thanks. And let the parasceve become a rigorous fast, lest we should appear

AD 345 — Athanasius

The following quote demonstrates that:

- The Lord’s Day is to new creation what the Sabbath was to old creation
- We must honor the Lord’s day in the same way as the Jews honored the Seventh day Sabbath in the Old Testament.
- The Lord’s Day is a memorial of the new creation.

The sabbath was the end of the first creation, *the Lord’s day* was the beginning of the second, in which he renewed and restored the old in the same way as he prescribed that they should formerly observe the sabbath as a memorial of the end of the first things, *so we honor the Lord’s day* as being the memorial of the new creation.⁴³

AD 350 — Cyril of Jerusalem

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The following quote demonstrates that:

- He warned against the Jewish Sabbath.

Fall not away either into the sect of the Samaritans or into Judaism, for Jesus Christ has henceforth ransomed you. Stand aloof from all observance of sabbaths and from calling any indifferent meats common or unclean.⁴⁴

The first day of creation reminds believers that all things find their source in the Lord, who has been in existence forever (Psalm 90:2). Each Person of the Trinity took part in creation (Nehemiah 9:6; Job 38:4; Psalm 89:11; John 1:3; Acts 17:24; Hebrews 1:10). Christians should be moved to worship the Lord for His wondrous work of creating the heavens, the earth, water, and light in one day.

God created the heavens and earth, the waters, and light on the first day of creation (Genesis 1:1–5).

The creations of each day are the following.

A. The first day – Sunday

1. Fire, Wind, Water and Earth = The four elements
2. Darkness
3. The seven heavens
 1. Angels
 5. Light (Jubilee 2:5 – 8; Gen. 1:1 – 5)

B. The second day – Monday

- The waters that covered the earth were divided and the firmament in the midst of the waters appeared. (Gen. 1:6-9, Jubilee 2:9).

C. The third day – Tuesday

1. Vegetation that can be plucked with fingers
2. Plants (grasses) that can be cut with sickle
3. Trees that can be cut with axe (Gen. 1:11 -13)

D. The fourth day – Wednesday

1. The sun
2. The moon
3. The stars (Gen. 1:14 – 16)

E. The fifth day – Thursday In the water:-

1. Those creeping with their breastbone (chest)
2. Creatures moving with their feet
3. The flying birds, animals and beasts (Gen. 1:20 – 22)

F. The sixth day – Friday On dry land:-

1. Animals
2. Birds and fowls
3. Beasts of the earth
4. Man with a living soul (Gen. 1:24 – 28)

God, after creating all these creations, saw that everything was good. He was satisfied and blessed them to be fruitful and multiply in order for their continuance. (Gen. 1:21; Ps. 104:31)

Creation of man

After God created all the numerous creatures according to their kind, from Sunday to Friday, He made man in His own image and after His likeness, to be superior and have dominion over all other creatures. Man was made in a more distinct manner. God breathed into his nostril the breath of life, which distinguishes him from all other creatures which live and act on instinct. God created them male and female, and blessed them to be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it. (Gen. 1:26 – 28). Man who is made in the image of God is rational. And should keep the reason why created by respecting words of God like one man for one woman and be spiritual.

G. Seventh day-Saturday

God ceased from all works of creation and rested on the seventh day. He blessed and hallowed the seventh day to be observed as a rest and a holy day. (Gen. 2:3) God is the Creator and Giver

of Life and

sustains through His Providence, protects and guides all that He created. (Ps. 104:27 – 31; 1cor. 3:22,15:28; Acts 14:1)

Chapter Six

6 The Four Classical Elements and their Symbolical Teachings according to EOTC.

- Reading assignment Akismmaros

ሃያው ዓለማት

ዘጠኝ ዓለማት እሳት፣ ሰባቱ ሰማያት፣ ምጽንዓተ ምድር (ከመሬት በታች ያለውና መሬት የጸናችበት አሳት፣ ገሃነመ እሳት ናቸው።

አምስቱ ዓለማት መሬት፣የምንኖርበት ምድር፣ሶስት ስሞች ያላት ሲሆን ከውሃ ሳትለይ ጸብር ጭቃ. ከውሃ ከተለየች በኋላ ምድር ማኅደር መኖርያ ከደረቀች በኋላ መሬት ትባላለች። ብሔረ ህያዋን፣ ብሔረ ብጹዓን፣ ገነት፣ ሲኦል ናቸው።

ሁለቱ ዓለማት ነፋስ፣ ባቢል ከጠፈረ በላይ ሐኖስን የተሸከመው ጠንከራ ነፋስ ነው። በርባኖስ ድቅድቅ ጩላማ ከምድር በታች የሚገኝ ምድርን የተሸከመው ነፋስ የሚገኘው እዚህ ነው።

አራቱ ዓለማት ማይ፣ ሃኖስ፣ ጠፈረ፣ ባሕር ውቅያኖስ ናቸው።

Chapter Seven

7.1 About the Seven Heaven and about the Seven Arch Angles.

የሰባቱ ሰማያት ተፈጥሮ

ቅዱስ ዳዊት የእግዚአብሔር ቃል የእሳት ነበልባል ይቆርጣል። ብሎ እንደተናገረ ሰባቱን ሰማያትን የፈጠራቸው ከእሳት ሙቀቱን አስማምቶ ብርሃኑን በመውሰድ መው። መዝ 28:7፣ እነዚህ ሰማያት የብርሃን ሰማያት ናቸው። ሰባቱ ሰማትም ከላይ ወደታች

1. ጽርሐ አርያም

ይህች ከሰማያት ሁሉ በላይ ናት። ስለዚህም ሰማየ ሰ፣ያት ወይም የሰማዮች ሰማይ ትባላለች። ከሁሉም ሰማይ ይልቅ ብርህን ናት ። እነሆ ሰማይ ሰማየ ሰማያትም፣ ምድርም በእርሷም ያለው ሁሉ የአምላክህ የእግዚአብሔርነው። እንዳለ ዘዳ 10:14፣ 1ኛ ነገሥ 8:27

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2. መንበረ መንግሥት

እግዚአብሔር ዙፋን በመሆኗ መንበረ መንበረ ትባላለች። እርሱ በፈቀደው አምሳል ጌትነቱንና ክብሩን የሚገልጽበት ስለሆነች መንበረ መንግሥት ትባላለች። ኢሳ 6:1፣ ሕዝ 1:26። ከዚህ በተጨማሪ በሦስት ስሞች ትጠራለች።

በመላእክት የሚመሰገንበት ሰማይ ስለሆነች መንበረ ስብሐት ሁሉን የሚችል አምላክ ዙፋን በመሆኗ መንበረ ጸባዖች፣ እውነተኛው ብርሃን መለኮት የሚገለጽበት መንበረ ብርሃን ትባላለች። 1ኛ ጢሞ 6:13፣ ራዕ 4:2

3. ሰማይ ውዱድ

ይህ ሰማይ በኪሩቤል ላይ ተዘርግቶ ለመንበረ መንግሥት እንደ አዳራሽ ወለል የሆነና መንበረ መንግሥት እንደ ዙፋን የተዘረጋበት የብርሃን ሰማይ ነው። ሕዝ 1:22-26

4. ኢየሱሳም ሰማያዊት(ንግሥተ ሰማያት)

ይህች ሰማይ በፊት ሳጥናኤል የተፈጠረበት ቢክድ የተባረረበት ለአዳም የተሰጠችው የምዕመናን ቦታ ናት። እኛ ክርስቲያኖችም ተስፋ የምናደርጋት፣ ዘላለማዊ ሕይወት የምንኖርበት ሰማይናት። 1ኛ ቆሮን 2:9. ገላ 4:36፣ ዕብ 12:22፣ ራዕ 21:2-14

5. ኢዮር

6. ራማ

7. ኤረር

ከላይ የተጠቀሱት ሦስቱ ሰማያት የመላእክት መኖር የመላእክት ከተሞች ይባላሉ። ቅዱስ ጳውሎስ ወደ እነዚህ ሰማይ መነጠቁን ተናግሯል። ፪ኛ ቆሮን ፲፪:፪

ቅዱሳን መላእክት

ቅዱሳን መላእክት ከእሳት ከነፋስ የተፈጠሩ መናፍስት ናቸው። ዕብ 1:14። መላእክት በመቶ ነገድ በአስር ከተሞች አድርጎ የፈጠራቸው ሲሆን በባሕርያቸውም ፈጣኖች፣ ረቂቃን፣ሕያዋን፣ የማይበሉ፣ የማይጠጡ፣ የማይደክሙ፣ የማይጋቡ፣ የማይዋለዱ ናቸው። መሳ 13፡15-21፣ ማቴ 22:30 እግዚአብሔር መቶውን ነገድ መላእክት በአሥር በአሥር እየከፈለ እየሰየመ አለቃ እየሾመላቸው በሚኖሩበት ሰማይ ላይ አስፍሯቸዋል።

የሰማይ ስም	የአሥሩ ነገድ ስም	የአለቃቸው ስም
ኢዮር	አጋዕዝት	ሳጥናኤል
	ኪሩባል	ኪሩብ
	ሱራፌል	ሱራፌል
	ኃይላት	ቅዱስ ሚካኤል
	አርባብ	ቅዱስ ገብርኤል

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ረማ	መናብርት	ቅዱስ ሩፋኤል
	ሥልጣናት	ቅዱስ ሱርያል
ኤሬር	መኪንንት	ቅዱስ ሰዳክያል
	ሊቃናት	ቅዱስ ሰላትያል
	መላእክት	ቅዱስ አናንያል

Angles of God are:

- Praise God Isa 3:6
- God’s throne carries .Eze 1:10, 10:14
- The Guardians of human beings Psa 34:7, Matt 18:10
- Can make Intercession. Psalm 106:21, Luke 1:19, Revelation 8:2,
- The know the earthly walk of all human beings. Luke 15:10
- Boing down is necessarily practiced to them. Joshua 5:13,
- They played a crucial role from the exodus to the incarnation which is the core for our salvation.

Chapter Eight

8. Millenarianism

The complex of beliefs that historians variously refer to as millenarianism, millennialism, chiliasm, or tausendjähriges Reich holds that this broken, fallen, imperfect, even evil-ridden world will be transformed into a perfect world of justice, peace, abundance, and mutual love. The name comes from the most popular Christian form of this belief: At a future time (initially at the end of six thousand years of earthly history), there would be a thousand-year (millennial) “reign of the saints” on earth, when the good would enjoy this messianic era, and the evil, along with Satan, would be bound in the pit. At the end of that thousand years Satan and his minions would be unleashed, leading to a final conflict that would culminate in them eschatological Last Judgment, in which the earth would be no more. The saved would go to heaven and the evil to hell. Hence millennialism remains within the time-space continuum of history (the saeculum). By contrast, eschatology marks the end of the physical universe, with the entirely spiritual rewards of redemption. Among the answers to → theodicy—why does a good God allow evil to flourish?—millennialism and eschatology are compelling and popular. They explain God’s tolerance of evil in this current world as a test, and they predict an apocalyptic resolution that will publicly reward those who do good and presently suffer, and will punish those who do

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evil and presently prosper. The only problem with this elegant solution to evil is that, at least until now, God and his agents have failed to deliver on this promise.

Millennial and eschatological beliefs alternate between quiescent and volatile, depending on contemporaries' convictions about the proximity of this future dramatic transformation.

Apocalyptic believers hold that the Day is coming very soon, if not now. They tend toward dramatic, even extreme actions that fluctuate wildly between self-abnegation and megalomania, abstinence and indulgence, pacifism and violence.

Convinced that the powers of evil rule the world corruption, oppression, cruelty, domination—and that this evil will be destroyed and replaced by a truly just world, often conceived as a radical egalitarianism (world turned upside down), millennial movements have long been violently subversive, or, as Norman Cohn called them, “revolutionaries” and “mystical anarchists.” When, by contrast, believers accept that the Day is far off, they tend to accept passively current suffering on the understanding that, once that Day has come, they will be justified and rewarded, while the evil who now dominate this world will get their just punishments (pie in the sky by and by, opiate of the masses). Emphasis on eschatological scenarios, a post-millennial final and non-earthly resolution to the problem of injustice, tends to reinforce the passivity of believers, since such scenarios rule demand major divine intervention, thus ruling out active participation in the transformation/perfection of this world. To date, all apocalyptic beliefs have been proven wrong. The study of millennialism or eschatology in action (i.e. apocalyptic movements) is the study of mistaken beliefs and of the response of believers to disappointment. This unusual element (most religious beliefs cannot be empirically proven wrong) has made apocalypticism one of the more problematic subjects of historical research.

Demotic millennialism: Egalitarian, without hierarchy, “no king but God,” bottom-up, holy anarchy (Jewish Zealots/Essenes, Anabaptists, anarchist communism). Apocalyptic enemy: evil empire.

– Imperial millennialism: Hierarchical, peace and order imposed from above through conquest, “one God, one ruler” (Constantinian Christianity, Jihad and Muslim imperial dynasties, USSR, Nazism). Apocalyptic enemy: chaos.

– Restorative: Model taken from a past “Golden Age,” Eden restored (Xhosa Cattle-Slaying,

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Ghost Dance, Salafijism).t totalitarian (Münster Anabaptists, Ta Progressive: Perfect world to come new, based on the cumulative development of mankind, never before seen (communism, democracies,technology-based utopias, Woodstock Nation).

– Messianic: Led by a dynamic, charismatic fijigure who has salvifijic powers and attains a near-deifijied or deifijied status. Messianic movements tend toward hierarchy, no matter how egalitarian the ethos (Jonestown).

– Pre- and Post-Millennialism: Variants of modern Christian millennialism. In the pre-millennial scenarios, Jesus comes before establishing the millennium, which tends to encourage passivity. In post-millennial scenarios, Jesus comes after believers establish the millennium, there- fore encouraging a more activist approach)..

8.1 Evolutionism

The theory of evolution, first and foremost is a theory. Its theory is that various plants and animal species evolved over millions of years from lower organisms, to eventually and finally humans. Charles Darwin being the main exponent of this theory, again, please keep in mind, it is a theory, claimed that the plants and animals evolved in a mechanical way; this was his hypothesis. The origin of species, according to Darwin, is seen in the change of the individual species: the adaptability, heredity, and natural selection which derives from the survival of the fittest. Evolution may be defined as any net directional change or any cumulative change in the characteristics of organisms or populations over many generations—in other words, descent with modification... It explicitly includes the origin as well as the spread of alleles, variants, trait values, or character states. 16

Evolution refers to change through time as species be- come modified and diverge to produce multiple descendant species. Evolution and natural selection are often conflated, but evolution is the historical occurrence of change, and natural selection is one mechanism—in most cases the most important—that can cause it. Recent years have seen a flowering in the field of evolutionary

biology, and much has been learned about the causes and consequences of evolution.

16 (Endler 1986: 5)

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The two main pillars of our knowledge of evolution come from knowledge of the historical record of evolutionary change, deduced directly from the fossil record and inferred from examination of phylogeny, and from study of the process of evolutionary change, particularly the effect of natural selection. It is now apparent that when selection is strong, evolution can proceed considerably more rapidly than was generally envisioned by Darwin. As a result, scientists are realizing that it is possible to conduct evolutionary experiments in real time. Recent developments in many areas, including molecular and developmental biology, have greatly expanded our knowledge and reaffirmed evolution's central place in the understanding of biological diversity.

According to evolutions Theory

There are no “evolutionary mistakes” because evolution happens only because of mistakes, when cells divide they make mistakes(mutations) while making copies of their DNA, when cells are subjected to radiation or certain chemicals, they undergo mutations.

Prominent scientists are speaking out against Darwinian evolution, and they're not even creationists. New findings are raising more questions than answers for the standard Darwinian view, and even evolutionary scientists find it difficult to ignore the implications.

A Facade of Unity

Secular scientists have debated the grand idea of evolution—and how it might possibly work in the real world—since Darwin first proposed his ideas over 150 years ago. Today this debate has gotten hotter than ever. This huge dissenting faction of evolutionary scientists believes that they need a new “extended evolutionary synthesis” (more on that in a moment). They are even holding their own scientific conferences, where they are dumping the traditional textbook version of Darwinian evolution.

What's “New” About Neo-Darwinism?

The discoveries of genetics created ongoing (and unresolved) challenges to classic Darwinian evolution. neither Darwin nor his contemporaries had any clue about genetics or the basic principles of inheritance, much less the complexity of cellular biology. At the same time that

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Darwin was writing, the monk Gregor Mendel was demonstrating how garden peas inherit simple traits (the first studies in genetics), but his work was unknown at the time.

Creationism – The belief that the creation story in the Old Testament or Hebrew Bible book of Genesis is literally true and is akin to a scientific explanation for the creation of the Earth and the development of life.

Creation science – A movement that has attempted to uncover scientific evidence to show that the biblical creation story is true. Some in the creation science movement, known as “young Earth creationists,” reject not only evolution but also the idea that the universe and the Earth are billions of years old.

Darwinian evolution – The theory, first articulated by Charles Darwin, that life on Earth has evolved through natural selection, a process through which plants and animals change over time by adapting to their environments.

Intelligent design – The belief that life is too complex to have evolved entirely through natural processes and that an outside, possibly divine force must have played a role in the origin and development of life.

Social Darwinism – A belief that Darwin’s evolutionary theory can be applied to human society and that groups of people, just like life in the wild, are subject to “survival of the fittest.” The now discredited idea influenced many social theories and movements in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, from laissez-faire capitalism to various eugenics movements.

Scientific theory – A statement or principle, honed through scientific observation, reasoning and experimentation, that explains a natural phenomenon.

Theistic evolution – A belief held by some religious groups, including the Catholic Church, that God is the guiding force behind the process of evolution.

8.2 Atheism

According to Britannica, atheism is the critique and denial of metaphysical beliefs in God or spiritual beings. As such, it is usually distinguished from theism, which affirms the reality of the divine and often seeks to demonstrate its existence of God. Atheism is also distinguished from agnosticism, which leaves open the question whether there is a God or not, professing to find the questions unanswered or unanswerable

Positive atheism Often results from the notion that to accept God implies a limitation on man: if God exists, then we are not free and we do not enjoy full autonomy here on earth. This way of looking at things fails to consider that a creature's freedom and autonomy flow from that creature's dependence on God.

In fact, the truth is just the opposite. As history has shown, particularly in our times, when one denies God one ends up denying man and his transcendent dignity as well. Others deny God because they think that religion, especially Christianity, is the fruit of ignorance and superstition and that it represents an obstacle to human progress. We can respond to this objection on historical grounds, for it is possible to show the positive influence of Christian revelation on the concept of the human person and human rights, and also on the origin and progress of science.

In general, those who deny God to affirm the perfection and the progress of humanity do so in order to defend a this-worldly view of historical progress that denies man's fulfillment in the world to come. The ends they propose are a political utopia or a purely material well-being incapable of fully satisfying the deeper desires of the human heart.

Among the causes of atheism, especially practical atheism, we must also include the bad example of believers, who "to the extent that they neglect their own training in the faith, or teach erroneous doctrine, or are deficient in their religious, moral or social life ... must be said to conceal rather than to reveal the authentic face of God and religion." On the other hand, the Church has always pointed to the testimony of Christians as the principal factor in carrying out the "new evangelization."

Atheists claim that there is no God. Most atheists call themselves non-theists. Many arguments are put forward by atheist thinkers to strategically disprove the theistic concepts regarding the existence of God. Atheism comes in many varieties. Here we deal with the arguments and reasons given by selected major atheists against the beliefs the theists holds and their attempts to prove the existence of God.

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An *atheist* doesn't believe in God or divine being. The word originates with the Greek *atheos*, which is built from the roots *a-* ("without") and *theos* ("God").

Atheism is the doctrine or belief that there is no God.

Forms of Atheism

Atheists either do not perceive man's vital bond to God or they explicitly reject it.

Atheism takes many forms:

1. PRACTICAL MATERIALISM which restricts man's hopes to his life on earth.
2. ATHEISTIC HUMANISM which sees man as having supreme control of history.
3. Contemporary atheism which sees man being liberated by economics. It claims that religion thwarts emancipation because it turns man's hopes to a future life and discourages earthly progress.
4. 4. *Accommodationists* (atheists who emphasize the common ground between the religious and nonreligious rather than the differences)
5. *Antitheists* (atheists who actively oppose religion and work toward a world without it)
6. 6. *Humanists* (people who focus on how to live a good human life in a natural universe)
7. 7. *Religious atheists* (including many Buddhists, Hindus, Unitarians, and Jains who keep their religious identities and philosophies without bothering any gods)

Reasons behind non-believing

1 Life Shocks

A life shock could lead the victim to a certain psychological state where s/he would deny anything surrounding him/her.

2 Attention Grabbing

After the big focus of the world on atheism and establishing many debates about atheism, many of attention grabbers started to declare themselves as atheists to grab other people's attention.

3 Family

Family members playing big role in managing one's religious status and beliefs about God as they are the surrounding people around person and family members have the biggest impact on the religious part.

Atheism in side Theism

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A. It's not cool to be a Christian. When you are ashamed of God, you are denying the Lord. When it's time to speak up and you remain silent that is denial.

If you never share Christ with your friends or never witness to the lost that is denial. Being a coward will take you to hell.

Sin will cause people to deny their knowledge of God. Rom 1:28

እግዚአብሔርን ለማወቅ ባልወደዱት ምጥን እግዚአብሔር የማይገባውን ያደርጉ ዘንድ ለማይረባ አእምሮ አሳልፎ ሰጥቶው፤

“The greatest single cause of atheism in the world today is Christians who acknowledge Jesus with their lips and walk out the door and deny Him by their lifestyle. That is what an unbelieving world simply finds unbelievable. “

Brennan Manning

The number one cause of atheism is Christians. Those who proclaim Him with their mouths and deny Him with their actions is what an unbelieving world finds unbelievable.”

— Karl Rahner

- Matthew 10:31-33

So don't be afraid; you are more valuable to God than a whole flock of sparrows. “Everyone who acknowledges me publicly here on earth, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven. But everyone who denies me here on earth, I will also deny before my Father in heaven.”

- Luke 9:25-26

And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but are yourself lost or destroyed? If anyone is ashamed of me and my message, the Son of Man will be ashamed of that person when he returns in his glory and in the glory of the Father and the holy angels.”

Luke 12:9 But anyone who denies me here on earth will be denied before God's angels

B. You deny God by living in hypocrisy. Faith that doesn't change your life is dead. If you say you are a Christian, but you are living in rebellion, you are a liar. You have never been converted. You have never repented of your sins. you are denying God by your lifestyle.

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Scientists about religion

1. **Einstein (Physicist)** “My religion consists of a deep but humble admiration of that supreme and boundless spirit which reveals itself in the minutest details that our weak and fragile minds can conceive”.
- Bacon (Philosopher)** “Only half knowledge removes from God but the full and true knowledge brings back to God
2. **Carpel (Biologist)** “From the time the renaissance man has confined himself of his own accord to the boundaries of his five senses”.
3. **Cartesios (Mathematician)** “God is the source of sureness and surety of science”.
4. **Pasteur (Physician)** “ I believe in Christ with that simple Childish faith of Briton peasant
Ramsey (Chemist) “ I am of the opinion that there is no real conflict between the facts of science and the essential teachings of Christianity”.
5. **Maltezos (Physician)** “Science cannot give to us that which does not have, such as kindness, self-denial and the sacrifice”.
6. **Amper (Physicist)** “ Listen to the wise but only with the one ear, the other ear must be always ready to listen to the whisper of your heavenly friend”.

1.3 Negative impacts on mankind and community

There are various quips thought about atheism. According to Pastor John Hagee , the Bible says “The fool has said in his heart there is no God.” In the critical statement on atheism he put that Atheists say there is no God. He requested to let him tell us that atheism has never painted a masterpiece. Atheism has never dispelled fear. Atheism has never healed a disease. Faith in God has, but not atheism. Atheism has never given anyone peace of mind. Atheism has never dried a tear. Atheism has never given an intellectual answer to the creation. Atheism is bankrupt and empty. It’s brain dead!¹⁷ These are the most common known negative impacts of atheism.

1.4.1. Psychological Anxiety and Conflict: The first impact of atheism is that it makes the individuals feels anxiety, confusion, disorder and psychological conflict, because each of us has a persistent instinct, as many questions go round his mind including: why are we created? Who created us? To where we go?

¹⁷ Cited by RANDAL RAUSER(2015) “ Is the Atheist My Neighbor?” PP 1.

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1.4.2 Selfishness and Individualism:

The inevitable result of the individual' psychological concern and fear of the days is his direction towards individualism and selfishness, shifting to serve his own interests and not thinking of others.

1.4.3 Morals Absence and Crime Propensity:

Because atheism does not educate the conscience, nor intimidate the man of a powerful God capable of observing his acts and deeds, the Atheist arises cold hearted, insensitive and has lost his morals that protect him from injustice and guide him to be kindness and compassion. Atheism taught its followers that they are found like this by coincidence, and they are not created by a creator, or they created themselves and they are animals like any other animal on earth, thus their feelings grow colder, and their sense of animalism grows, and decadence and turning to prove themselves through having more desires and pleasures, in case if their living conditions or the human ordinances prevented them from reaching their animal goals and desires.1.4.4 Atheism demolishes family system: It is well know that "Family" is the most important cell in the social system of mankind. And when humans get corrupted all the family relations will get corrupted as well. For instance a corrupt husband will have a negative impact on his children & wife and the same concept applies for the wife & children.

1.4.5 Communities Sabotage: In the light of atheism, the modern community has become similar to the community of forest and those who read about the Western community now see the extent to which crime has become daily acting, as well as it becomes an organized and sophisticated behavior, where despite the availability of adultery and immorality spreading, women's raping dramatically, and despite the availability of working and production opportunities, burglary and armed robberies spreading among people with different classes, it is hardly a day goes by tensor may be hundreds of these crimes happens every day.

1.4.6 Political Crime: Perhaps the greatest impact of atheism is its impact on global politics, and there relationships system among countries. Where the atheistic materialism morality that has made the man's heart filled with cruelty and selfishness pushed him to applicate these cruelty and selfishness in the field of global political relations as well. Therefore, we have seen great

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colonial countries used very despicable means in enslaving poor people, as well as getting their fortunes and plunder their wealth, so the world now is fired with the global selfishness material practiced by the colonial countries, which is based on the enslavement of people and plunder their resources as well as making these poor countries feel of anxiety, fear, chaos and disagreement even easier for them to rob their resources and steal their wealth.¹⁸

Conclusion

The doctrine of creation is that God created everything, both the visible worlds and the invisible, out of nothing. Without the continuing creative activity of God at every moment, the cosmos would not be; it would be nothing. Speaking of the Logos-Word of God, holy John the Theologian writes, “Through him all things came into being, not one thing came into being except through him.” (*Jn 1.3*)

Moreover, the creation is good because it is created by God, who is the author of good. He is, himself, good and goodness, light and life, and so the work of his hands is innately good for that very reason.

God creates the cosmos out of nothing, and it is very good. That is the essential dogma of creation.

The basic teaching and doctrine of the Orthodox Church on Creation is: a.) God created the world out of nothing, by exercise of His own free will, b.) He created it in time; c.) with both an adequate aim and end, d.) and orders and guides it according to His almighty Will and Wisdom (divine providence)

¹⁸ <https://www.westeastinstitute.com>

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