

DOCTRINE 1

UNIT SEVEN THE GOD WHO CREATES

INTRODUCTION

- ↳ The Kingdom of God
 - The Bible affirms that God is king, the rightful Lord of creation.
 - Through history humans have rebelled against God's right to rule.
 - Jesus announced that the Kingdom of God was at hand.
 - He called people to prepare for the kingdom through repentance and faith in the gospel.

- ↳ Covenant
 - A covenant is a promise which binds us to another person in relationship or pact.
 - After the fall, God made provision for his rule to be re-established.
 - He created his own people, living under his own kingdom which he exercised through his covenant.

THE NATURE OF CREATION

↳ God and Creation

- It is possible for us to think of God as “above and beyond” the world, unconscious of its existence.
- The Bible gives us no reason to think this way – Paul says “For from him and through him and to him are all things” (Romans 11:35-36).

↳ From him...are all things.

- God is the eternal source of all that exists.
- The world is not eternal, it was created by God without pre-existing sources.
- The implication of this is that everything belongs to God.
- We do not own part of creation, God owns it all and we are merely stewards.

↳ Through him...are all things.

- God continues to sustain the world.
- The whole universe is dependant on him for its continued existence.
- Jesus said “My Father is always at his work to this very day” (John 5:17).

↳ Through him...are all things.

- God has plans for creation, he has an end in view.
- God is the author of everything and is the end of everything.
- Paul reminds us that the Glory of God should be the goal in all things, not the glory of humankind.

↳ God's Creation

- DEPENDENT: Everything depends on God, human attempts at being in control are doomed to failure.
- GOOD: God saw that his creation was good (Genesis 1) – sin has damaged the creation, but it maintains its good character (1 Timothy 4:4).
- RELIABLE: The reliability of creation depends on a reliable God. Polytheists, dividing up creation between various forces, can never trust the creation.
- GOD-GLORIFYING: As the universe is the work of God, it reveals something of his majesty (Psalm 19:1).
- CHRIST-CENTRED: The New Testament emphasises Christ's role in creation (John 1:3) – Paul emphasises this by saying that “all things were created by him and for him (Colossians 1:16).

THE USE OF CREATION

↳ The King of Creation

- God is the king of creation, his Son is his true image, the first-born of all creation (Colossians 1:15).
- The Bible also tells us that we are in the image of God – humanity is given a mandate to rule over other creatures, but under the supreme rule of God.
- This passage has been the subject of much criticism, accused of justifying human pillaging of world resources.
- If there is truth in this, it comes from abuse of the passage rather than its proper use.
- Sin has changed the human relationship with the world – people are abusing God's gift to them.

↪ Worship and Creation

- As well as the abuse of the world, people commit the sin of false worship.
- This is quickly followed by moral depravity – created things, and things we ourselves have created, become substitutes for God.
- Whenever we treat the visible world as the ultimate source of our lives we begin to serve some aspect of it.
- As a result a different form of false religion can appear – ‘ascetism’ – self denial and abstinence as the path of godliness.
- We must not serve creation but use it to worship God.

ISSUES IN CREATION

↪ Scientific Accounts of Creation

- Modern science apparently provides a very different account of the origins of the universe from the Biblical account.
- Modern physicists speak of the Big Bang, biology teaches evolution, both taking place over vast periods of time.
- Christians have responded to these scientific claims in a number of ways.
- Our understanding of the Biblical account may be wrong – developments in Biblical scholarship help us to reduce conflict with science by showing exactly what the Bible writers meant.
- We must recognise the provisional nature of scientific claims – they may be wrong or need revision.
- The view of evolution as merely a ‘hypothesis’ can be overplayed.
- Scientific support for evolution needs to be acknowledged and arguments against it need to be cogent.

- Due care also needs to be exercised when scientific theories seem to agree with Christian doctrine.
- Some see science and theology as having a different focus and therefore not being in conflict.
- It is said that science answers questions of 'how', the Bible tells us 'who' and 'why'.
- The danger here is in separating science and theology so much that statements about God lose all sense in the real world.
- Modern scientific explanations and methods have arisen in a culture shaped by the Bible.
- True science is part of our legitimate stewardship of God's world.

↳ Miracles in the Bible

- If we see miracles as 'supernatural interventions' we are seeing a God who sets a machine going and then interferes occasionally for his own purposes.
- This is not the Bible's picture of God – the Bible shows a God who is continually upholding all things.
- Scientific research which excludes the contribution of God can lead us to believe that God plays no part at all.
- We are tempted to discount the power of God and believe that even the most unusual events have a materialistic explanation.
- Biblical miracles are unusual or remarkable events which point to God and to his plans, linked with revelation and clustered around the great moments of revelation.
- Miracles are not interventions by God as much as surprising variations in the way he does things.
- The distinction between the ordinary work of God and the miraculous is not always easy to make.
- Much of the time we are dealing with events which are miraculous because of **when** they occurred.
- 'Natural' and 'supernatural' events are due to the mighty power of the same God.
- Christians discern the active power of God at many levels.

- All this is the outworking of God's power, whether or not we use the language of 'miracle'.

CONCLUSION

↳ By his word of command the sovereign Lord created all things, by his word he sustains them.

↳ The doctrine of creation is vital for a Christian view of the world – it teaches that everything is from, through and for God and that we are utterly dependant on him.