



03: CREATION & SIN

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. – Genesis 1:1

HOW DID THE WORLD COME INTO EXISTENCE?

This question is foundational to all other questions that shape one’s worldview and corresponding views of God and human life. While a myriad of opinions exist on this matter, there are five predominant non-Christian categories of thought:

Thought	Central Idea	Emphasis
Deism	God creates but is not present in the workings of His creation.	God’s transcendence
Pantheism	God is part of His creation.	God’s personal immanence
Panentheism/Monism	All in God. All is one.	God’s transcendent nature
Process Theology/Open Theism	God is in process, growing in knowledge with His creation	God’s personal nature
Naturalism	Matter comes forth from natural processes, without aid from any supernatural entity. In this worldview, matter and life are created by chance.	Matter is either eternally existent, or it comes into effect “ex nihilo” (out of nothing).

The above views of creation fail both philosophically and biblically. Pantheism/Panentheism both have a god that is part of the creation, making it impossible for Him to be the creator. Their god remains either transcendent (Other) or immanent (Personal), but not both. He is unable to rule the creation he is part of. Matter is usually an illusion; matters of evil and good are seen as relative, and part of the same god nature.

Other systems of belief struggle with how the universe is created. Naturalism and/or Materialism leave us with an infinite regress of cause and effect, or the incredulous doctrine that everything we see came out of nothing with no causal force or purpose.

The biblical creation story tells us that an eternal, necessary first cause (God), created the universe, and all that is in it. The law of causality demands that all effects (Matter) need a cause, and that these changes take place in the current space dimension in which we live. God is eternal (Psalm 90:2) and is subsequently apart from His creation as the necessary first cause.

Evolutionary theory recognizes that man came from matter already existent on the earth, but it is unable to determine how that process took place. Biblically, we realize that God’s power was able to do what is naturalistically impossible: bringing forth life from lifeless matter. God created the substance (matter) of the universe ex nihilo (from nothing). The Hebrew word BARA is used of creation in Genesis one, while the word ASAH is used for the creation of man. In Genesis 2:7 it then uses the word YATSAR meaning “formed”, depicting the formation of a

substance already present (i.e. The earth or dirt). Thus, man’s first name is ADAM, meaning red clay or ruddy. It shows the uniqueness of how made was made.

The creation narratives of humanity all have similar elements to them, highlighting God’s revelation of Himself to all men of all cultures through the course of time (Psalms 19:1; John 1:9; Romans 1:18-25). It also is a byproduct of oral tradition passed on from generation to generation (Genesis 11:1-11).

WHAT DO THE SCRIPTURES SAY ABOUT CREATION?

The following verses help shed light on the fact of creation and ensuing varieties of opinion.

- Exodus 20:11 *For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.*
- Nehemiah 9:6 *You alone are the LORD. You made the heavens, even the highest heavens, and all their starry host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to everything, and the multitudes of heaven worship you.*
- Job 38:4 *“Where were you when I laid the earth’s foundation? Tell me, if you understand.”*
- Psalm 19:1 *The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.*
- Psalm 96:5 *For all the gods of the nations are idols, but the LORD made the heavens.*
- Ecclesiastes 11:5 *As you do not know the path of the wind, or how the body is formed in a mother’s womb, so you cannot understand the work of God, the Maker of all things.*
- Hebrews 11:3 *By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.*

For a further study of the Scriptures on creation, a more comprehensive list is included in the following tables to help you mark these sections of Scripture in your Bible for reference.

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 1:1-28	Genesis 1:31	Genesis 2:1-25	Genesis 5:1-2	Genesis 9:6
Exodus 20:11	1 Samuel 2:8	2 Kings 19:15	1 Chronicles. 16:26	Nehemiah 9:6
Job 9:8-9	Job 10:3	Job 10:8	Job 12:7-9	Job 26:7-13
Job 28:23-26	Job 37:16	Job 37:18	Job 38:4-38	Psalms 8:3
Psalms 19:1	Psalms 19:4	Psalms 24:1-2	Psalms 33:6-7	Psalms 33:9
Psalms 65:6	Psalms 74:16-17	Psalms 78:69	Psalms 89:11-12	Psalms 89:47
Psalms 90:2	Psalms 95:4-5	Psalms 96:5	Psalms 102:25	Psalms 103:22
Psalms 104:2-3	Psalms 104:5-6	Psalms 104:24	Psalms 104:30-31	Psalms 119:90-91
Psalms 121:2	Psalms 124:8	Psalms 136:5-9	Psalms 146:5-6	Psalms 148:5-6
Proverbs 3:19	Proverbs 8:26-29	Proverbs 22:2	Proverbs 26:10	Proverbs 30:4
Ecclesiastes 3:11	Ecclesiastes 7:29	Ecclesiastes 11:5	Isaiah 17:7	Isaiah 37:16
Isaiah 40:12	Isaiah 40:26	Isaiah 40:28	Isaiah 42:5	Isaiah 44:24
Isaiah 45:7	Isaiah 45:12	Isaiah 45:18	Isaiah 48:13	Isaiah 51:13
Isaiah 51:16	Isaiah 66:2	Jeremiah 5:22	Jeremiah 10:12	Jeremiah 10:16
Jeremiah 51:19	Jeremiah 27:5	Jeremiah 31:35	Jeremiah 32:17	Jeremiah 33:2
Jeremiah 51:15-16	Jeremiah 10:13	Amos 4:13	Amos 5:8	Amos 9:6
Jonah 1:9	Zechariah 12:1			

NEW TESTAMENT

Mark 10:6	Mark 13:19	Acts 4:24	Acts 7:50	Acts 14:15	Acts 17:24-26
Romans 1:20	Romans 11:36	1 Corinth. 8:6	1 Corinth. 11:12	2 Corinth. 4:6	2 Corinth. 5: 5
2 Corinth. 5:18	Ephesians 3:9	1 Timothy 6:13	Hebrews 1:1-2	Hebrews 2:10	Hebrews 3:4
Hebrews 11:3	Hebrews 11:10	Revelation 4:11	Revelation 10:6	Revelation 14:7	

THE TRINITY AND CREATION

The Trinity is involved in the creation of the universe. God the Father devises the plan, God the “Word” orchestrates His plan, and God the Spirit brings it forth with the power of His might. That is why the Scriptures clearly teach

that Jesus Christ (John 1:3; John 1:10; 1 Cor 8:6; Eph 3:9; Col 1:16-17; Heb 1:2; Heb 1:10; Rev 3:14), as well as the Holy Spirit (Genesis 1:2; Psalms 33:6; 104:30; Isaiah 40:12-14) is the creator of all things

WHAT IS THE FALL?

God created this world in a state that was TOV (meaning good, pleasant, or agreeable) and upon the creation of the man and woman God declared His entire creation “very good” (1:31). This intended state of GOOD beauty in all things is described in the Old Testament as “Shalom” (Isa. 2:2-4, 11:1-9, 32:14-20, 43:1-12, 60:1-22, 65:17-25; Joel 2:24-29, 3:17-18). Surveying the condition of our planet and human life (including death, suffering, injustice, boredom, annoyances, miseries, fears etc.) it is obvious that something has gone terribly wrong. All of the individual and corporate shortcomings of God’s perfect intentions for all of creation, whether intentional or unintentional or through omission or commission, qualify as sin.

Scripture teaches that God clearly commanded the first man and woman not to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil or they would die (Gen. 2:16-17). The man and woman sinned against God. Because Adam was the head of the human race, when he sinned everyone who would ever live (other than Jesus Christ who had no earthly father) was implicated in his sin (Gen. 3:1-6; Hosea 6:7; Rom. 5:12-21; I Cor. 15:21-22, 15:45-50).

Everyone (except Jesus Christ) is from conception sinful by nature and corrupted to the very core of their being and therefore incapable of doing anything that pleases God (Psalms 51:5; Rom. 3:10-18; Rom. 8:7-8). Thus, everyone (except Jesus Christ) sins (I John 1:8) by breaking God’s holy laws (Ps. 14:1-3; Isa. 53:6; Rom.3:10, 3:23; I John 3:4) because they are sinners by nature and are simply showing forth their hearts (Pr. 4:23, 17:19, 20:9; Matt. 6:21; Luke 6:45).

The fall was the descent of the human race and the rest of God’s creation (Romans 8:18-27) into a state of rebellion against God. Despite his depravity, man continues to have dignity because He still remains an image bearer of God even though that image is marred by sin (Gen. 1:26, 9:6; Jam. 3:9).

IS EVERYONE TOTALLY SINFUL?

Yes, while people are not absolutely sinful (they could do evil things with greater degree and frequency) all people are totally sinful in that their every motive, word, deed, and thought is for their own glory rather than God’s (Ps. 29:2; Romans 3:23, 11:36, 16:27). This is because those who do not belong to God are utterly incapable of pleasing God and doing things for His glory (Matt. 7:17-18; Rom. 8:7-8).

There is a vestige of moral sense, however, in people because of the conscience that God gave them (Romans 2:14-15). However, even the seemingly good deeds done from the moral conscience are mere filth to God if done apart from loving obedience to Him because they are attempts at meriting our own righteousness which is the heart of pride. These attempts are an enemy of the humble grace in which one receives the righteousness of God as a free gift (Is. 64:6).

Man is also totally sinful in the fact that all of his person is marred by sin. This includes the mind (Eph. 4:18), the will (Rom. 6:16-17), the emotions (Titus 3:3), and the physical body (Rom. 8:10).

DOES GOD CAUSE SIN?

The Bible is clear that God is Light and in Him is no darkness at all (I John 1:5). The Bible is also clear that God does not take any delight in sin (Ps. 5:4), He hates and detests sin (Pr. 6:16; Zech. 8:17), He hides His face from sinful people (Is. 59:2, 64:7). Therefore, God does not in any way cause sin and sin is a privation of His good creation and a contortion of His beautiful and glorious perfect works.

WHERE DOES SIN COME FROM?

God does not tempt us to sin, but instead the temptation arises from within our own hearts. Therefore, mere behavioral change is not sufficient to remedy the human condition, but instead we need a new heart and nature if there is to be any true victory over sin in our lives.

- James 1:13-15 *When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is fullgrown, gives birth to death.*
- Proverbs 27:19 *As water reflects a face, so a man's heart reflects the man.*
- Proverbs 4:23 *Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.*
- Matthew 12:34b *For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks.*
- Proverbs 20:9 *Who can say, "I have kept my heart pure; I am clean and without sin"?*
- Jeremiah 17:9 *The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?*
- Mark 7:21-23 *For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance, and folly. All these come from inside and make a man 'unclean.'*
- Luke 6:45 *The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks.*

WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF SIN?

- Genesis 2:16-17 *And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."*
- Matthew 13:14 *In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: "You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving."*
- John 8:43 *Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say.*
- Romans 6:23 *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*
- 1 Corinthians 1:18 *For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.*
- Ephesians 2:1 *As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins...*
- Colossians 2:13 *When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins.*

HOW SHOULD WE DEAL WITH OUR SIN?

- **Conviction** – recognizing our sin through the ministry of the Holy Spirit and truth of Scripture (John 16:7-11)
- **Confession** – agreeing with the Holy Spirit and Scripture regarding our sin (1 John 1:5-9)
- **Repentance** – a turning from the sin and to God and obedience to Him out of love (Luke 17:3; Acts 3:19, 5:31, 11:18)
- **Restitution** – seeking to make amends as much as possible for our sins (Ex. 22:3; Pr. 6:31; Ezek. 33:15)
- **Forgiveness** – asking for grace from those you have sinned against, or giving grace to those who have sinned against you (Matt. 6:12-14, 18:35; Mark 11:25; II Cor. 2:10; Eph. 4:32)
- **Reconciliation** – once all parties have resolved their sins they can be reunited (Matt. 5:24; Eph. 2:14-16; II Cor. 5:18)

WHAT IS THE UNPARDONABLE SIN?

This question has baffled commentators since the days of Jesus and we see this sin mentioned only once in the Scriptures in Matthew 12:31-32. This sin appears to be the rejection of the Holy Spirit of God. Man's proclivity is towards this rejection, and in need of regeneration in order to "choose" God (Acts 16:14). Man freely chooses to reject God.

When the Pharisees were confronted with the choice to attribute Christ's miracles to the Holy Spirit or Satan, in their disbelief they chose Satan. Their choices were congruent with their belief (cf. Hebrews 6:4-6; 10:29). It is the Holy Spirit who testifies on behalf of Christ (John 15:26; 16:14,15), therefore any rejection of Him is a rejection of Christ and the only sin that cannot be forgiven is unbelief in Jesus Christ.

HOW CAN I STOP COMMITTING A SIN?

Rom. 8:13-16 "For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death [mortify] the misdeeds of the body, you will live, because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry "Abba, Father."

Mortification is Spirit-enabled conviction that man needs to change based upon God's word that results in repentance and grace-centered living (Hebrews 4:12-13).

1. **Repentance** – I want to change. Based upon the good, perfect, and acceptable nature of God's will. (Romans 12:1-2)
2. **Faith** – I can change. Based upon God's faithfulness to His promises made possible by His power. (I Corinthians 10:13)
3. **Worship** – I have a plan to change. A realization that virtue goes beyond merely changing a vice to repenting and doing good works.
 - Clearly identify your goal of replacing a sinful habit with a godly one. (Ephesians 4:28-31)
 - Clearly identify your resources (i.e. prayer, Holy Spirit, Scripture, elders, Christian friends, books, etc.)
 - Clearly identify your plan for using your resources:
Recognize how sin is birthed → external stimulus (world and Satan) + internal reaction (flesh) = sin
Recognize how obedience is birthed → reduced external stimulus (world and Satan) + reduced internal reaction (flesh) = obedience.
4. **Discipline** – I am working my plan.
5. **Perseverance** – I am never going back. Use any failures as learning opportunities to grow in your sanctification.

FOR FURTHER READING

On Creation

Evolution: The Challenge of the Fossil Record by Duane Gish

Darwin on Trial by Phillip Johnson

Scientific Creationism by Henry Morris

Evolution: A Theory in Crisis by Michael Denton

On Man's nature

The Problem of Pain by C.S. Lewis

Fearfully and Wonderfully Made by Paul Brand and Philip Yancey

Created in God's Image by Anthony Hoekema

Man: The Image of God by G.C. Berkouwer

The Christian View of Man by J. Gresham Machen

The Hunger For Significance by R.C. Sproul

On Sin

Not The Way It's Supposed to Be by Cornelius Plantinga Jr.

Original Sin by Henri Blocher

04: SALVATION



WHAT IS SALVATION?

Salvation is defined as deliverance by God from God and His wrath (Romans 5:9-10). God is holy and righteous and our sins against Him cause His wrath to burn against us, which can continue forever (Exodus 34:6-8; Deuteronomy 29:24-29, 32:21-22; Psalm 11:4-7; John 3:36; Romans 1:18-32, 5:5-8; 2 Corinthians 5:18-20; Ephesians 5:6; Colossians 1:21-22, 3:6; Revelation 14:9-11, 14:18-20, 19:11-15).

Salvation is made possible through Jesus Christ alone and there is no possibility of salvation apart from Him (John 1:29, 3:17-18, 4:42, 5:19-23; Acts 4:12; Titus 1:15; I John 2:2; Revelation 5:9). This is because Jesus our Priest laid down His life as the substitute sacrifice for the sins of His people (Isaiah 53:6-12; John 11:50, 15:13; Romans 5:17-19; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15, 5:21; Galatians 3:13; Hebrews 10:10, 10:12; I Peter 3:18). Jesus' death and resurrection were a propitiation (appeasing God's wrath, cleansing us from sin, and granting us mercy from God) for His people (Romans 3:25; Hebrews 2:14; I John 2:2, 4:10).

Scripture also uses the concept of redemption in explaining salvation, which means we were enslaved to sin (John 8:34; Romans 6:6) and consequently Satan (Colossians 2:15) and death. But then we are redeemed, or purchased, by Jesus' death and resurrection to belong to God, righteousness, and life (Exodus 6:6; Deuteronomy 7:8, 15:15; 2 Samuel 7:23; 1 Chronicles 17:21).

As a result of Jesus, God's people are now reconciled to God and each other (Romans 5:10-11; 2 Corinthians 5:18-21; Ephesians 2:16; Colossians 1:20-21). God's people are also given Jesus' triumph over the world, sin, death, and Satan/demons (Psalm 110:1; 1 Corinthians 15:21-28; Ephesians 1:20-23, 2:16; Colossians 1:20-21, 2:13-15).

PROCESS OF SALVATION

Salvation is God's process in a believer's life, as Romans 8:28-30 explains:

"And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified."

This verse is often thought of as the glorious golden chain of salvation. God initiates, marks out, and secures our salvation, and it cannot be broken. What He begins, He is sure to end (see Philippians 1:6). The underlined words from Romans 8:28-30 are explained further:

- **Foreknowledge** is God's intimate knowledge of events and His people (Acts 2:23; Romans 11:2; I Peter 1:2, 1:20). Predestination literally means "to mark out beforehand" (Acts 4:28; 1 Corinthians 2:7; Ephesians 1:5,11)
- **Called** has to do with conversion or a bringing of one to faith (Matthew 22:14; Romans 1:6, 9:24; I Corinthians 1:24, 1:26, 7:18, 7:21; Galatians 1:15; Ephesians 4:1, 4:4).
- **Justified** means to be legally acquitted from wrongdoing (salvation done in past time) (Romans 1:17, 3:21-5:21; Galatians 3:11, Ephesians 2:8-9).
- **Sanctification** (salvation in present time), is the process of maturity as God conforms us to His Son's image (Romans 8:13,29; Romans 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 6:11,19,20; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Colossians 1:28; Heb. 13:20-21). Sanctification fuses man's responsibility, God's work, and the church's equipping in the process of a believer's growth in Christ (Ephesians 4:11-16; Philippians 2:12-13).
- **Glorification** is the final completion of God's purpose in salvation, which includes our death and resurrection (Romans 8:17, 8:29; I Corinthians 15; Colossians 1:27, 3:4).