



Café Theology  1. Creation
"If it doesn't stretch your mind it probably won't stretch your life"

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Personal or Impersonal?

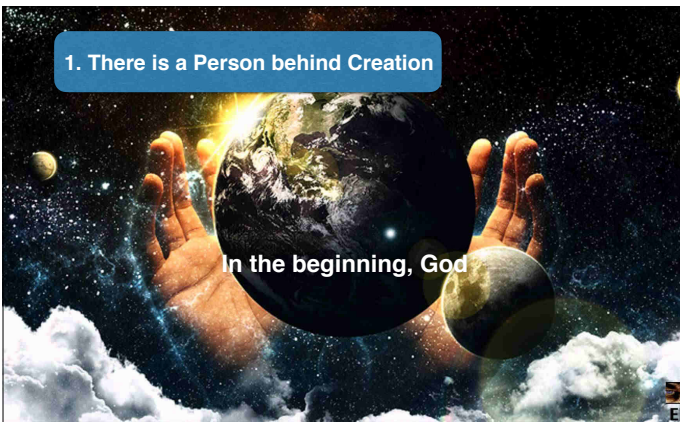
Purpose? Random Chance?




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1. There is a Person behind Creation



In the beginning, God

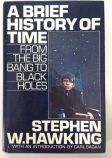
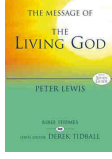


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1. There is a Person behind Creation

"What is that breathes fire into the equations and makes a universe for them to describe? The usual approach of constructing a mathematical model cannot answer the questions of why there should be a universe for the model to describe. Why does the Universe go to the bother of existing?"

"Genesis and the entire Bible answers that question not what a 'What' but a 'Who?'"



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GENESIS


Gk. Geneseos = 'birth', 'genealogy', 'history of origins'

AUTHOR
 Jewish and Christian tradition – Moses
 (Ezra 6:18; Luke 24:44)

But note work of later editor
 (e.g. 14:14; 36:31; 47:11)

10: Creation Belongs to God



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10: Creation Belongs to God

PURPOSE


Assuming Moses' authorship / editorship, and assuming wilderness years as the date...

Who are we...

What kind of world do we live in...

What kind of God do we worship...

In the light of contemporary prevailing creation accounts?



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10: Creation Belongs to God

Genesis in History

90,000 BC	evidence of hunter/gatherers in fertile crescent
8-9,000 BC	Jericho inhabited
5-8,000 BC	'Neolithic revolution' (Gen 4 culture of cultivation and livestock farming) (New Stone Age)
3,800 BC	Writing invented
2,700 BC	Pyramids in Egypt
2,000 BC	Ancient Babylon Creation and Flood accounts
1,900 BC	Abraham arrives in Canaan (Middle Bronze Age)
1,400 BC	Moses leads Exodus (?) (Late Bronze Age)
1.050 BC	Saul anointed as King (Iron Age)



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10: Creation Belongs to God

Contemporary prevailing creation accounts

- There are many gods
- Activity born out of mutual mistrust, in-fighting, ignorance of long-term consequences
- Chaos precedes the gods who are locked in warfare with it in continuing creative acts
- The world is therefore disordered and unpredictable
- Divinity is given to created things (sun, moon etc)
- Mankind is created to provide food for the gods
- Mankind is obliterated by a flood because the gods find them too noisy



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10: Creation Belongs to God

Structure of Genesis 1: 'Forming and Filling'
THE EARTH WAS *Tohu wa-bohu*

Shapeless (forming / function)	Empty (filling / functionaries)
Day 1 – separation of light and darkness	Day 4 – creation of lights to rule day and night
Day 2 – separation of waters to form the sky and the sea	Day 5 – creation of birds and fish to fill the sea and sky
Day 3 – separation of sea from dry land and creation of plants	Day 6 – creation of animals and humans to fill land and eat the plants
Day 7 – heavens and earth were formed and filled and God 'rested' (ceased forming and filling)	



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10: Creation Belongs to God

"In the Bible the cosmos can be viewed as a temple... Genesis 1 can now be seen as a creation account focusing on the cosmos as a temple... This is what makes day seven so significant, because without God taking up his dwelling in its midst, the (cosmic) temple does not exist.


The most central truth to the creation account is that this world is a place for God's presence.

Though all of the functions are anthropocentric, meeting the needs of humanity, the cosmic temple is theocentric, with God's presence serving as the defining element of existence"

(John H. Walton 'The Lost World of Genesis One')



Creation as God's Temple



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10: Creation Belongs to God

The Creation Story

Who? children of Israel in wilderness

Why? to establish their identity, their purpose, and the nature of the God who called them out of Egypt.

How? In highly structured poetic writing – reflecting (but critiquing) other widely known Creation accounts



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10: Creation Belongs to God

What?

- There is only one God
- Universe is ordered by Him
- Universe is good and completed
- All men *and* women are made in God's image
- The earth is His yet he invites humanity into meaningful partnership

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Creation is to be ruled and cared for

3 When I consider your heavens,
the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars,
which you have set in place,

4 what is mankind that you are mindful of them,
human beings that you care for them?

5 You have made them a little lower than the angels
and crowned them with glory and honour.

6 You made them rulers over the works of your hands;
you put everything under their[g] feet:

7 all flocks and herds,
and the animals of the wild,

8 the birds in the sky,
and the fish in the sea,
all that swim the paths of the seas.

Psalms 8

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Creation is to be ruled and cared for

Humankind - over the earth (Dominion)



Genesis 1:28 (NRSVA)
28 God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.'


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Creation is to be ruled and cared for

Humankind - of the earth (Dependence)



Thus Genesis 2 presents us with an alternative to the dominion theology of Genesis 1...

The first human is made of the same stuff, the arable soil of the biblical hill country, as are all of the other forms of life; and the divine breath blown into his nostrils is the same breath with which all the animals live and breathe (Gen. 2:7; 7:22).

Theodore Hiebert, Rethinking Dominion Theology

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Creation is to be ruled and cared for

Humankind - for the earth (Development)

Care

Genesis 2:15 (NRSVA)
15 The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to **till it (abad) and keep it (samar)**

abad and samar usually translated 'serve and guard' elsewhere in OT

when both words used together = either Israelites 'serving' God or 'keeping' his word OR to priests who 'keep' the 'service' or 'charge' of the tabernacle.

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Creation is to be ruled and cared for

Dominion

Dependence



Development

Gen 1:26-28
 So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

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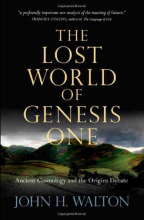
Creation is to be ruled and cared for

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5/7. Creation is Dependent Upon God and Open to Him

Day 7: Divine Rest is in a Temple



Deity rests in a temple and only in a temple. This is what a temple is - a place for divine rest.

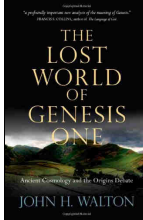
In the ancient world rest is what results when a crisis has been resolved or when stability has been achieved, when things have "settled down". Consequently normal routines can be established and enjoyed. For deity this means that the normal operations of cosmos can be undertaken. This is more a matter of engagement without obstacles rather than disengagement without responsibilities"

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5/7. Creation is Dependent Upon God and Open to Him

Day 7: Divine Rest is in a Temple



When the deity rests in his temple it means that he is taking command, that he is mounting to his throne to assume his rightful place and his proper role.

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2. There is a Purpose for Creation
creation is there for the Son

Colossians 1

The Son
who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For **in him** all things were created: **things in heaven and on earth**, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; **all things** have been created **through him** and **to (for) him**.

17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

18 And he is the head of the body, the church;

who is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. 19 For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell **in him**, 20 and **through him** to reconcile **to himself all things**, whether **things on earth or things in heaven**, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

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2. There is a Purpose for Creation
creation is there for the Son

Proverbs 8:22-31 New International Version (NIV)

22 "The Lord brought me forth as the first of his works,
before his deeds of old;

23 I was formed long ages ago,
at the very beginning, when the world came to be.

24 When there were no watery depths, I was given birth,
when there were no springs overflowing with water;

25 before the mountains were settled in place,
before the hills, I was given birth,

26 before he made the world or its fields
or any of the dust of the earth.

27 I was there when he set the heavens in place,
when he marked out the horizon on the face of the earth;

28 when he established the clouds above
and fixed securely the fountains of the deep,

29 when he gave the sea its boundary
so the waters would not overstep his command,
and when he marked out the foundations of the earth.

30 Then I was constantly[c] at his side,
I was filled with delight day after day,
rejoicing always in his presence,

31 rejoicing in his whole world
and delighting in mankind.



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2. There is a Purpose for Creation
creation is there for the Son

1. Wisdom is God's agent in Creation and preservation of the world

19-20
By wisdom the Lord laid the earth's foundations,
by understanding he set the heavens in place;
by his knowledge the watery depths were divided,
and the clouds let drop the dew.

2. Humanity is called to be God's vice-regent in running creation (Ps 8)

3. Therefore 'Wisdom is the attribute needed by humans to equip them in this task.

21
My son, do not let wisdom and understanding out of your sight,
preserve sound judgment and discretion;



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2. There is a Purpose for Creation
creation is there for the Son

1. Jesus is God's agent in Creation and preservation of the world

6 For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and to (for) him.

2. Humanity is called to be God's vice-regent in running creation (Ps 8)

3. Therefore 'Jesus is the attribute needed by humans to equip them in this task...

2:6 So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him,
7 rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

3:1 Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.



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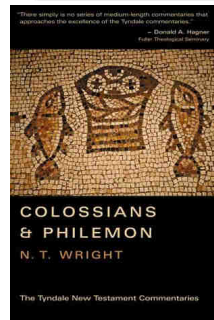


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2. There is a Purpose for Creation
creation is there for the Son



"The pre-existent Lord of the world becomes Lord of the church (1:18-20) **in order to** become Lord, fully, of the world which he has made but which has rebelled against him"



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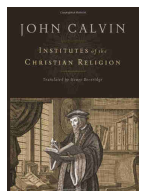
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Creation is there to praise its Maker
and to reflect His glory

Romans 1: **20** For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.

"There are innumerable witnesses in heaven and on earth that declare the wonders of his wisdom. Not only those more arcane matters for the closer observation of which astronomy, medicine, and all of the natural sciences are intended, but also those that force themselves upon the sight of even the most unlearned and ignorant peoples, so that they cannot open their eyes without being forced to see them"



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Creation is there to praise its Maker and to reflect His glory

Reflected Glory?
The Rationale Mind

"The Christian says that the laws of physics are a reflection of the faithfulness of God the lawgiver, and we can understand them because that same God underlies the rationality of our minds.

David Atkinson



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Creation is there to praise its Maker and to reflect His glory

Reflected Glory?
The Ordered World

That very ordered nature is what makes science possible. The whole enterprise of science rests precisely on the assumption of an ordered world in which pattern can be discovered and categories established. The ordered rationality of the world, deriving from its transcendent rationality of the creative Word, is a basic assumption – not usually expressed in those terms – of natural science. There would be no science at all without an ordered world"

David Atkinson The Message of Genesis: The Dawn of Creation



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Creation is there to praise its Maker and to reflect His glory


Reflected Glory?
The Beautiful World

Creation is to be meditated upon

The Peace of Wild Things

When despair for the world grows in me
and I wake in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.
I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting with their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

Wendell Berry



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Creation is there to praise its Maker and to reflect His glory

Reflected Glory?
The Extravagant World

44 But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, **45** that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.



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Creation is there to praise its Maker and to reflect His glory

Reflected Glory?

- The Rationale Mind
- The Ordered World
- The Beautiful World
- The Extravagant World



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1. Creation

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