

## The DOCTRINE OF SIN

### Lesson 9 – A Theology of Creation

John MacArthur

Genesis 1

*“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.”*

How you live your life now and beyond now may not bear fruit for decades, but your \_\_\_\_\_ may be the thing that makes the gospel believable in the life of someone, long, long into the future.

One of the ways that contemporary people including professing Christian’s fail to glorify God, is by failing to acknowledge Him as \_\_\_\_\_.

As Christians we should recognize that theology and biblical revelation \_\_\_\_\_ about everything which it speaks.

Whoever’s intelligent enough and powerful enough to design and create and sustain the incalculable complexity of the universe macrocosm and microcosm is certainly also intelligent enough to do the relatively simple task of providing a revelation about that creation which is logical, comprehensible consistent and accurate. If the Creator, then, wrote a book and revealed reality about His creation, it would be \_\_\_\_\_, and it would be \_\_\_\_\_ as accurate as centuries go by and science develops.

There is no scientific \_\_\_\_\_ for creation. There is no scientific explanation for creating a fully occupied fully mature universe in 6 /24 hr days there is no science that explains that.

No matter what you observed, nothing you observed would contribute at all to an explanation about what happened because there is no observable, repeatable explanation, there is no fixed law, there is nothing scientific about a \_\_\_\_\_. It is by nature supernatural.

#### Hindu

The Hindu Sacred Text “Vishnu Purana” describe the Moon and Sun as being equal distance from the Earth which is surround by the shell of an egg.

Additionally the Ancient Hindu text known as Rigveda describes the earth is flat and triangular composed of seven stages, one of honey one of butter, one of wine

#### Greeks

Greek mythology had Atlas supporting the earth.

Thales said the earth was held up by water.

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Discussion:

Compare the importance of living a consistent life of faith over an extended period with historic creationism. Can you think of some examples of how this truth has been modeled for us? (*Hint: The earth is round*)

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Read all of Acts 12. What was the ultimate cause of Herod's death? How did the sin of his demise differ from his earlier transgressions?

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How does John 1:14 establish the word of God has the absolute truth and what is it based on? How does 1 Cor 15:12-18 help our understanding?

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What distinguishes the miracle of Biblical creation with other religious myths (see following)?

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## Chinese

Three rivers of thought and practice flow into making traditional Chinese belief. These are Taoism, based on the teachings of the book 'Tao Te Ching, Confucianism, springing from the ethics of K'ung Fu tzu, and Buddhism, which first appeared in China during the 1st century CE.

'Let it be told of a time when there was nothing but chaos, and that chaos was like a mist and full of emptiness. Suddenly, into the midst of this mist came a great colourful light and from this light all things that exist came to be. The mist shook and separated, that which was light rose up to form heaven and that which was heavy sank. Became solid and formed the earth.

Now from heaven and earth came forth strong forces and these two forces combined to produce yin and yang. Picture this yang like a dragon - hot, fiery, male, full of energy. Imagine this yin as a cloud - moist, cool, female, drifting slowly. Each of these forces is full of great power. Left alone they would destroy the world with their might and chaos would return. Together they balance each other and keep the world in harmony.

This then is yin and yang and from them came forth everything. The sun is of yang and the moon, yin. The four seasons - winter, spring, summer and autumn - and the five elements - water, earth, metal, fire and wood - sprang from them, So did all kinds of living creatures.

So there was the earth, floating like a jellyfish on water. But the earth was just a ball without features. Then the forces of yin and yang created the giant figure P'an Ku, the Ancient One. P'an Ku, who never stopped growing every year of his great long life, set to work to put the earth in order. He dug the river valleys and piled up the mountains. Over many thousands of years he shaped and created the flow and folds of our earth.

But such work took its toll. Even mighty P'an Ku could not escape death and, worn out by his struggle, he collapsed and died. His body was so vast that when he fell to the ground his body became the five sacred mountains, his hair the plants and his blood the rivers. From his sweat came the rain and from the parasites living on his body came forth human beings.

The people at first lived in caves but soon Heavenly Emperors came to teach them how to make tools and houses. The people also learnt how to build boats, to fish, to plough and plant, and to prepare food. This is how it all began.' The belief in the balancing forces of yin and yang lies at the heart of the Chinese philosophy and influences the way the Chinese people treat their environment. They see the earth as a living being which must be cared for properly, kept in order, so that the powerful forces of yin and yang are kept in balance.

## Hindu

This is not the first world, nor is it the first universe. There have been and will be many more worlds and universes than there are drops of water in the holy river Ganges. The universes are made by Lord Brahma the Creator, maintained by Lord Vishnu the Preserver and destroyed by Lord Shiva. Since the universes must be destroyed before they can be recreated, Lord Shiva is called the Destroyer and Re-creator. These three gods are all forms of Supreme One and part of the Supreme One. The Supreme One is behind and beyond all.

After each old universe is destroyed nothing is left but a vast ocean. Floating on this ocean, resting on the great snake Ananta, is Lord Vishnu. Some say that a lotus flower springs from his navel and from this comes Lord Brahma. And it is from Lord Brahma that all creation comes.

How does Lord Brahma create? Some tell of how he grows lonely and splits himself in two to create male and female. Then he becomes one again and human beings are created. In the same way he creates all the other living things, from the great animals to the tiniest insects. Others say that everything comes from different parts of Lord Brahma's body. All the different animals and all the people come from his mouth, arms, thighs and feet. Everything comes from one - Lord Brahma, who is part of the Supreme One - so everything is part of the Supreme One. For this universe, this world and this Lord Brahma, like all those before and all those to come, will be destroyed by Lord Shiva.

How long is the life of a universe? Its length is beyond imagination. One day to Lord Brahma is longer than four thousand million of the years that we know. Every night when Lord Brahma sleeps the world is destroyed. Every morning when he awakes it is created again. When the Lord Brahma of this universe has lived a lifetime of such days the universe is completely destroyed by Lord Shiva.

Everything disappears into the Supreme One. For an unimaginable period of time chaos and water alone exist. Then once again Lord Vishnu appears, floating on the vast ocean. From Lord Vishnu comes forth Lord Brahma of the new universe and the cycle continues for ever.

This belief in reincarnation, in the cycle of life, strongly influences the lifestyle of many Hindus. It can best be explained by the terms 'dharma' and 'karma'. Dharma may be translated as 'duty' and for Hindus, part of that duty is to respect and care for all living things. The belief that after death we are reborn in another body, not necessarily human, leads to a great respect for all life and results in many cases of vegetarianism. Karma is the result or product of what we do. If we do our duty, then we create good karma, since the next life we may have is directly related to the actions of our present life. To the Hindu, everything is part of the Supreme One, and thus every living thing is equally important in the great cycle of life.

## Humanist

Humanism is a way of life, which centers upon human values and regards human beings as part of the natural world, with dignity and worth achieved through the use of reason and scientific method. Humanists therefore believe that everything that exists is a result of natural processes, which in time, science will be able to explain. The creation story given here is the theory, which scientists believe best explains the facts that we know about the origins of the universe.

This earth, our home, is a small blue-green planet, orbiting a minor star on one arm of a galaxy called the Milky Way. A galaxy is composed of gas, dust and many millions of stars and there are some hundred thousand galaxies in the known Universe. Recent observations show that clusters of galaxies are moving apart from one another as the space between them expands and this must mean that long ago they were closer together. It is now believed that, at a certain time in the past, which can be calculated as roughly 15000 million years ago, all the matter and energy in the Universe was concentrated in a mathematical point with zero volume from which it burst out in one 'Big Bang' to create the Universe.

After the Big Bang the Universe began to cool and clouds of gas collapsed under the pull of their own gravity to form stars. About 4500 million years ago the Earth condensed out of the gas and dust swirling around our star, the sun. Fossil records show that the first signs of life appeared soon after - about 4000 million years ago. Lightning and ultra-

violet light from the sun began to break apart the simple molecules of the primitive atmosphere and these fragments recombined to produce complex molecules, which could eventually reproduce themselves.

So, over millions of years, different forms of life have evolved; some species existed briefly then died out, others became extinct after millions of years. If life on Earth appeared only, then all living things must be descended from a common ancestor. Now, for the first time, one species, Homo sapiens. Has the power to destroy the world; the future of life on Earth is in our hands.

Since human beings are the only creatures with the knowledge and understanding to be responsible for their actions. Humanists believe that we should use our knowledge for the benefit of every living creature on our planet. Care for the environment is crucial because, in our ignorance, we could destroy the delicate balance, which has resulted from the process of evolution.

## Muslim

The religion of Islam is often thought of as beginning with Muhammad, who was born in Mecca in 570 CE. Forty years later the word of God was revealed to him by the angel Gabriel, and this revelation was the first of many which were collected and came to constitute the Qur'an, the Muslim holy book. But Muslims believe that Muhammad was the last in a line of prophets and that the message given to him was the final one. Thus they do not see him as the founder of the religion, but believe that Islam has its origin in the very creation of man.

In the time before time, God was. And when God wants to create something, all he needs to say is "Be", and it becomes. So it was that God created the world and the heavens. He made all the creatures, which walk, swim. Crawl and fly on the face of the earth. He made the angels, and the sun, moon and the stars to dwell in the universe. And consider, as the Qur'an says, how God poured down the rain in torrents, and broke up the soil to bring forth the corn, the grapes and other vegetation; the olive and the palm, the fruit trees and the grass.

Then it was that God ordered the angels to go to the earth, and to bring seven handfuls of soil, all of different colors, from which he could model man. God took the seven kinds of earth and molded them into a model of a man. He breathed life and power into it, and it immediately sprang to life. And this first man was called Adam. God took Adam to live in Paradise. In Paradise, God created Eve, the first woman, from out of Adam's side. God taught Adam the names of all the creatures, and then commanded the angel to bow down before Adam. But Iblis, one amongst the angels, refused to do this, and thus began to disobey God's will.

God placed the couple in a beautiful garden in Paradise, telling them that they could eat whatever they wanted except the fruit of one forbidden tree, But the evil one tempted them to disobey God, and eat the fruit. When God knew that Adam and Eve had disobeyed him, he cast them out of Paradise and sent them to earth. But God is merciful. The earth was created to give food, drink and shelter to the human race. The sun, moon and stars give light. It is a good world, where everything has been created to serve people. And people, the Qur'an teaches, should serve God and obey his will. For those who submit to the will of God will be saved, and taken to live for ever in Paradise.

The Muslim creation story is found in the Qur'an, and further explained in various teachings given by Muhammad, which were collected and are known as the Hadith. At the heart of the creation story is something which Muslims all over the world hear every day in their Call to Prayer - God is great. For Muslims believe there is only one God who created everything. God's world is a good world, and when people obey or submit to God then life is good. The word 'Islam' means submission. Although God made humans superior to the rest of creation, Muslims believe that this means humans have been given everything on earth to care for and look after. The world is not ours to do with as we want. The Qur'an teaches that Muslims should be thankful for all living things, for God is the creator of all life.