MAN CREATED BY GOD

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Gustav Wingren once wrote,

> Man was created in the beginning by the creative Word, and destined to live by that which comes from the mouth of God. Men understand themselves alright and receive true human life in the hearing of God's Word. The Word reaches the objective for which it was sent out only when it effects an entrance into men. Man reaches the spring out of which he can draw human life only when the Word of the Creator comes to him. … What is given in faith signifies the deliverance of man from his unnatural condition, his restoration to the estate in which he was created. For Luther, unbelief is *demonic*. It is not "human" to doubt and "paradoxical" to believe; on the contrary, where doubt arises, it is diabolical powers that strive for mastery in human life.[1]

Views of Creation

There has been a long history of alterative perspectives on creation that have challenged such Biblical ideas as the Creator-creature distinction, creation from nothing (*ex nihilo*), six-day creation in time, and the goodness of God as well as the goodness of the created order. The first of these perspectives is dualism. It maintains that there are two eternal sources of being, a good and bad one, the latter of which is often associated with material. In the Ancient Near East myth *Enūma Elish*, creation happens when the good Marduk become the chief god by slaying a bad monster goddess named Tiamat, who represents chaotic matter. Marduk then completes creation by forming an ordered world from the dead goddess's body.[2] Greek religious thinkers like Hesiod,[3] Greek philosophers like Plato,[4] Gnosticism,[5] and Manicheanism would continue to develop this kind of thought.[6] Though not the first to argue Genesis was borrowing from *Enūma*

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[1] Gustaf Wingren, *The Living Word: A Theological Study of Preaching and the Church*, trans. Victor C. Pogue (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1960), 13, 93.

[2] "Epic of Creation (1.111) (Enūma Elish)," in *Context of Scripture*, ed. William W. Hallo (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 1:390–402.

[3] Unless otherwise indicated, all classical references are to the *Loeb Classical Library* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1911–). Hesiod, *Theogony* 116ff.

[4] A benevolent divine demiurge tries to make chaotic matter conform to the eternal forms in Plato's *Timaeus*. However, he has limited success because the material world turns out to be a pale reflection of the ideal world. Plato, *Timaeus* 28aff.

[5] In the *Apocryphon of John*, the demiurge becomes the God of the Old Testament, a lesser and malevolent god who traps sparks of the divine in human beings. The Father God of the New Testament, conversely, sent his Son to provide the true knowledge that will free human beings from the material world. *The Coptic Gnostic Library: A Complete Edition of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, ed. James M Robinson (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 2:12–177.

[6] *Manichaean Text from the Roman Empire*, ed. Iain Gardner and Samuel N. C. Lieu (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

Elish, Hermann Gunkel popularized the move to read the "battle against chaos" (*Chaoskampf*) motif into Genesis.[7]

The next perspective was monism or pantheism. This typically deterministic view maintains that there is one eternal source of being; namely God, and that creation emanates from him. God is responsible for evil to the degree that the existence of evil is affirmed. The materiality of the world is debated. The Hindu Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad states that Brahman (i.e., ultimate reality) is everything: "Clearly, this self is *brahman*—this self that is made of perception, made of mind, made of sight, made of breath, made of hearing, made of earth, made of water, made of wind, made of space, made of light and lightless, made of desire and desireless, made of anger and angerless, made of the righteous and unrighteous; this self that is made of everything."[8] Some forms of Buddhism,[9] Presocratic thinkers like Parmenides,[10] and Baruch Spinoza would continue to develop this sort of thinking.[11] A variation of monism called panentheism understands God to be enmeshed in all reality. At the same time, God has some influence over reality, though he is not in complete control of evil. Idealism and Process Philosophy/Theology would advance this worldview.[12]

The third perspective to arise was naturalism or materialism. This is deterministic monism of another sort. Naturalism is an *a priori* reduction of all reality to eternal matter. In an effort to exclude God, it deifies matter. Diogenes Laertius reports the following ideas of Democritus, one of the founders of Presocratic Greek Atomism, "And it is because of their solidity that these atoms are impassive and unalterable. ... All things happen by virtue of necessity, the vortex being the cause of the creation of all things, and this he calls necessity. ... The qualities of this exist merely by convention; in nature there is nothing but atoms and void space. These, then, are his opinions."[13] Charles Darwin,[14] the Marxists,[15] and behavioral science would continue to develop this kind of thinking.[16] Note also that even the Big Bang is not categorically an absolute beginning in current science.[17]

The fourth perspective to emerge was the idea that God created all things instantaneously (cf. Sir 18:1 [Vulg.]). Philo of Alexandria writes, "[Moses] says that in six days the world was created, not that its Maker required a length of time for His work, for we must think of God as

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[7] Hermann Gunkel, *Creation and Chaos in the Primeval Era and the Eschaton: A Religio-Historical Study of Genesis 1 and Revelation 12*, trans. K. William Whitney Jr. (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 2006).

[8] "Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad." in *The Early Upanishads Annotated Text and Translation*, trans. Patrick Olivelle (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 121 (4.4.5).

[9] "Form does not differ from emptiness, and emptiness does not differ from form." *A Comprehensive Commentary on the Heart Sutra*, *BDK English Tripiṭaka* (Berkeley: Numata Center of Buddhist Translation and Research, 2001), 90.

[10] Parmenides, *On Nature* D5–D8.

[11] Baruch Spinoza, *Spinoza Complete Works*, trans. Samuel Shirley (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2002), 224 (*Ethics* 1.14).

[12] Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, rev. ed. (New York: The Free Press, 1978), 364.

[13] Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 9:45.

[14] Charles Darwin, *The Origen of Species by Means of Natural Selection* (London: John Murray, 1859).

[15] Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The German Ideology* (Amherst: Prometheus Books, 1998).

[16] B. F. Skinner, *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1971).

[17] Ethan Siegel, "Don't Believe These 5 Myths About The Big Bang," https://medium.com/starts-with-a-bang/the-top-5-myths-you-probably-believe-about-the-big-bang-ffe5169ca1d3.

doing all things simultaneously, remembering that 'all' includes with the commands which He issues the thought behind them."[18] Church fathers like Origen, Augustine, and others taught this as well.[19]

The fifth perspective is that God created from eternity and that Genesis 1–2 represent two different creations. These views have been attributed to Origen. Many have understood him to be teaching an eternal creation because he feared a creation in time would make God mutable.[20] Many have also understood Origen to be teaching an initial immaterial creation populated by pure souls. However, some souls fell because their love for God cooled. A second material creation then became necessary to keep these souls from total destruction and ultimately save them.[21] Others would posit two different creations for historical critical reasons.

The sixth perspective is old earth creationism. This takes three different forms. Millions of years are squeezed into a supposed gap between Genesis 1:1–2 (i.e., gap theory creationism).[22] The days of creation are interpreted as periods over which millions of years occur (i.e., day-age creationism).[23] God creates in bursts of creation over millions of years (i.e., progressive creationism).[24]

The final perspective is theistic evolution. God brings the building blocks of reality forth via the Big Bang. He then used evolution to complete creation over millions of years.[25]

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[18] Philo, *Creation of the World* 3.

[19] Origen, *Contra Celsum*, trans. Henry Chadwick (Cambridge: University Press, 1953), 375 (6.60); Augustine, *The Works of St. Augustine. A Translation for the 21st Century*, ed. John E. Rotelle and Boniface Ramsey (Hyde Park: New City Press, 1990–), 1/13:271–75 (*The Literal Meaning of Genesis* 4.51–55).

[20] Current scholarship disputes that Origen is teaching this here: "But if there never is a 'when' he was not almighty, by necessity those things must also subsist by which he is called the *Almighty*, and he must always have had those over whom he exercised power and which were governed by him as king or prince…." Origen, *On First Principles A Reader's Edition*, trans. John Behr (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 29–30 (1.2.10). Behr disputes this interpretation on lv–lxi, lxxix–lxxxviii.

[21] Current scholarship disputes that this is being taught here. "And if [rational creatures] had a beginning such as the end for which they hope, they were undoubtedly from the beginning in those [worlds] that are *not seen* and *eternal*. And if this is so, then there has been descent from the higher conditions to the lower, not only on the part of those souls who have by the variety of their movements deserved it, but also on that of those who, to serve the whole world, were brought down from the higher and invisible condition to these lower and visible one, even against their will. … For those souls which, because their excessive spiritual defects needed these denser and more solid bodies, and because of those for whom this was necessary, this visible world was founded. … It must be supposed that the world was created of such a kind and such a size as to be able to contain all those souls which were appointed to be trained in this world…." Origen, *On First*, 219–20 (3.5.4). Behr disputes this interpretation on lxi–lxiv.

[22] Thomas Chalmers, *Posthumous Works* (New York: Harper, 1848–49), 1:1. See also Johann Heinrich Kurtz, *Bibel und Astronomie*, 2nd ed. (Berlin: Justus Albert Wohlgemuth, 1849), 94–96; Franz Delitzsch, *System of Biblical Psychology*, trans. Robert Ernst Wallis, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1879), 74ff; A. F. C. Vilmar, *Dogmatik: Akademische Vorlesungen*, ed. K W. Piderit (Gütersloh: C Bertelsmann, 1874), 1:242ff.

[23] George Stanley Faber, *Treatise on the Genius and Objects of the Patriarchal, the Levitical, and Christian Dispensations* (London: C. & J. Rivington, 1823); Hugh Miller, *The Testimony of Rocks or Geology in Its Bearing on the Two Theologies, Natural & Revealed* (Edinburgh: William P. Nimmo, 1873).

[24] Bernard Ramm, *The Christian View of Science and Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954).

[25] John W. Dawson, *The Origin of the World According to Revelation and Science* (New York: Harper, 1877).

Knowledge about Creation

The Sacred Scriptures say that creation is an article of faith (Heb 11:3). The only sure source of divine revelation about creation is the inerrant and sufficient Scriptures (Luke 16:31; Joh 8:31; 10:35; Gal 1:8; 2 Tim 3:16–17; 2 Pet 1:21). While the apocryphal books are not canonical, they are referenced because they shed light on how the canonical texts were understood. To be sure, God works in history (Ps 78:3–4; John 1:14; 1 Cor 10:11; Eph 1:11). Conscience and creation also provide some law-based and limited natural knowledge of God and his works (Ps 19:1–6; Acts 14:17; Rom 1:20; 2:15). Still, human beings are warned not to seek God apart from God's Word and especially not to pry into the hidden mind of God (Deut 29:29; Isa 45:15; 1 Cor 1:18–25; Col 2:8). What is more, both conscience and creation have been corrupted by the fall (Gen 3:17; 6:5; 8:21; 9:2; Ps 51:5; Rom 5:12), though they have not become essentially evil and remain God's good creation (Ps 8:5–9; 24:1; 50:12; 139:13–16; 1 Cor 10:26). To think that finite fallen human beings can have univocal access to the hidden mind of the infinite perfect God via human faculties and nature is an assumption rooted in the false cosmologies articulated above. It presumes man possesses a spark of the divine.

Meaning of "Create"

In contrast to BDB, *TWOT*, and *NIDOTTE*, most lexicographical studies argue that the root בָּרָא "to create" (used in qal and niphal) should be distinguished from the much rarer roots בָּרָא "to cut" (used only in piel [Josh 17:15, 18; Ezek 21:24; 23:47]) and בָּרָא "to be fat" (used only in hiphil [1 Sam 2:29]).[26] This would mean that God is always the unique subject of the verb "to create" (בָּרָא). The fact that this word is never used with an accusative of material also suggests it means more than "to make" (עָשָׂה). Andrew Steinmann notes:

> While at [Genesis] 2:3 [*created*] is used as a summary for all of God's activity in this narrative, in the first five instances it introduces new things brought into being: heavens and earth (v. 1), animate life that is endowed with *breath of* life (vv. 21, 30) and human beings bearing *the image of* God (v. 27 [three times]). *Created* is in contrast to the Hebrew word for *do* or *make*, which is used throughout this account for making and forming things from already created items or as a general word for God's work (vv. 7, 11, 12, 16, 25, 26, 31, 2:2, 3).[27]

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[26] *Hebrew and Aramaic Dictionary of the Old Testament*, s.v., "בָּרָא;" *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament [TLOT]*, s.v., "בָּרָא;" *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament [HALOT]*, s.v., "בָּרָא;" *Dictionary of Classical Hebrew [DCH]*, s.v., "בָּרָא;" *Hebräisches und Äramäisches Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament [Gesenius¹⁸]*, s.v., "בָּרָא." Exceptions to this would be *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament [BDB]*, s.v., "בָּרָא;" *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament [TWOT]*, s.v., "בָּרָא;" and *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis [NIDOTTE]*, s.v., "בָּרָא."

[27] Andrew Steinmann, *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2019), 50.

Since there is never any mention of any material from which God "creates," even Gerhard von Rad and Nahum Sarna recognize that "to create" (בָּרָא) contains the idea of creation from nothing (*ex nihilo*).[28]

When God "creates" (בָּרָא), he commands something new into being that was not there before. The Bible uses this verb in eight ways: 1) creation from nothing (Gen 1:1), 2) creation from matter that was created from nothing (Gen 1:27), 3) continued creation and conservation of creation (Ps 102:18; 104:30), 4) recreation of human beings (Ps 51:10; 2 Cor 5:17; Eph 2:10), 5) recreation of the heavens and earth (Isa 65:17–18), 6) creation of God's just judgments (Isa 45:7), 7) creation of divine benefits (Isa 41:20; 45:7; 57:19), and 8) creation of new things (Num 16:30; Jer 31:22).

Creator

In the words of the Lutheran fathers, the one true God, who consists of three distinct persons (Deut 6:4; Matt 28:19; 2 Cor 13:14), is the efficient cause (*causa efficiens*) of creation.[29] This same Trinity is discussed from two different perspectives as the three ancient creeds and other Lutheran Confessions attest.[30] The ontological perspective (Immanent Trinity) describes God's internal works (i.e., God as he relates to himself). Martin Chemnitz explains the old adage *opera trinitatis ad intra sunt divisa* this way, "The works which God does outside of all created things, within Himself, are not common to the three persons, but are peculiar to only one person … there is reserved for each person His order and His characteristic."[31] In other words, only God the Father, who is the font, source, and first person of the Trinity, is unbegotten or born of none.[32] Only God the Son, the second person, is begotten or born of the Father (Ps 2:7; John 3:16). Only God the Holy Spirit, the third person, proceeds from the Father and the Son (John 15:26; Gal 4:6). A necessary and substantial relationship exists between the giver and receiver of the internal works. The begotten one shares the same substance with the unbegotten begetter.

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[28] Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis*, trans. John H. Marks, rev. ed., Old Testament Library (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1972), 49, 51; Nahum M. Sarna, *The JPS Torah Commentary Genesis*, JPS Tanakh Commentary (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 5.

[29] Johann Gerhard, *On Creation and Angels, On Providence, On Election and Reprobation, On the Image of God in Man Before the Fall*, trans. Richard Dinda, Theological Commonplaces (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2013), 11–15 (locus 8, par. 8–18); Jesper Rasmussen Brochmand, *Systematis Universae Theologiae … decidantur*, rev. ed (Leipzig: Johann Hallervord, 1638), 1:192–93; Johannes Rudbeckius, *Loci Theologici: Föreläsningar vid Uppsala universitet 1611–1613*, ed. Bengt Hägglund (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2001), 65–66.

[30] *Die Bekenntnisschriften der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche*, ed. Irene Dingel, Bastian Basse, Marion Bechtold-Mayer, Klaus Breuer, Johannes Hund, Robert Kolb, Rafael Kuhnert, Volker Leppin, Christian Peters, Adolf Martin Ritter, and Hans-Otto Schneider, 1st ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014); *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, ed. Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, trans. Charles Arand, Eric Gritsch, Robert Kolb, William Russell, James Schaaf, Jane Strohl, and Timothy J. Wengert (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000). Apostles' Creed; Nicene Creed; Athanasian Creed; SC 2; LC 2; SA I.

[31] Martin Chemnitz, *Chemnitz's Works*, trans. Fred Kramer, Luther Poellet, Georg Williams, J. A. O. Preus, Matthew Harrison, Jacob Corzine, and Andrew Smith (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2008–15), 7:105. See also Martin Luther, *Luther's Works* [*LW*], ed. Jaroslav Pelikan, Helmut Lehmann, and Christopher Brown (St. Louis and Philadelphia: Concordia Publishing House and Fortress Press, 1955–), 15:302.

[32] Konrad Dieterich, *Institutiones Catecheticae … Expositio*, ed. August Dieckhoff (Berlin: Gust. Schlawitz, 1864), 210, 220.

The economic perspective (Economic Trinity) describes God's external works (i.e., how God relates to his creation). Chemnitz explains the old adage *opera trinitatis ad extra sunt indivisa* this way, "The external works are common to the three persons, but in such a way that the differences and properties of the person are not confused."[33] In other words, the Father is the Creator (Deut 32:6). The Son is the Redeemer (1 John 1:7). The Spirit is the Sanctifier (Gal 3:5). However, each person has a distinct role to play in creating, redeeming, and sanctifying (John 5:19; Rom 11:36). No necessary or substantial relationship exists between giver and receiver of the external works. The Creator neither shares the same substance as the creation, nor is the creation an emanation from the Triune God. As Athanasius notes, God eternally begets by nature. He creates in time by will.[34] Thus, creation is the first external act of the Trinity. If the Immanent Trinity were strictly collapsed into the Economic Trinity as the so-called Rahner Rule might suggest,[35] creation would become essential to God and panentheism would result.

The Holy Trinity is the sole efficient cause of creation. First, the Scriptures only speak of God creating all things. As the three ancient creeds and other Lutheran symbols confess, it was God the Father who created the heavens and earth (Gen 1:1). He did so through his Word (Gen 1:3: Ps 148:5; Heb 11:3), that is God the Son (John 1:3, 14; 1 Cor 8:6; Col 1:15–16; Heb 1:1–2, 10), and by means of the "Spirit of God" (Gen 1:2; Ps 33:6, 9).[36] The "Spirit of God" (רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים) cannot be reduced here to the "wind of God" or "breath of God" as the NRSV and Alter translations respectively would have it. The Spirit's "hovering" (מְרַחֶפֶת) implies creative agency (Gen 1:2; Job 33:4; Ps 104:30). These same translations render this Hebrew expression as "Spirit of God" elsewhere in Genesis (Gen 41:38). Hebrew lexicons support "Spirit of God" in Genesis 1:2 and 41:38.[37] Second, the Bible reserves the Hebrew word "to create" (בְּרָא) for God alone. Said differently, humans can "make" (עָשָׂה), but only God can "create." Third, the Scriptures state that everything that was ever created was only created by God (Isa 44:24; 45:6–7; Jer 10:16; John 1:3; Acts 14:16; 1 Cor 3:22; 8:6; Eph 3:9; Col 1:16; Heb 3:4). Finally, nature itself attests that God is its Creator (Rom 1:20. cf. Wis 13:5; Sir 43:5).

Exegetical Excurses on Genesis 1:1–3

Many false views of creation are rooted in a misunderstanding of Genesis 1:1–3. This study supports the traditional understanding of these verses as expressed in the following translation: "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. [2] The earth was desolate and empty, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. [3] Then God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light."

Genesis 1:1 is the main clause and a complete sentence. Here God creates the building blocks of creation out of nothing (i.e., no preexistent time, space, or matter). Thus, Genesis 1:1 is not a title that introduces events first occurring in the subsequent verses. The word order and construction of this verse are emphatic and unparalleled. "In the beginning" (בְּרֵאשִׁית) is definite

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[33] Chemnitz, *Chemnitz's Works*, 7:108. See also *LW* 15:302.

[34] *NPNF²* 4:364–65 (Athanasius, *Against the Arians* 2.18.31). See also John of Damascus, *Writings*, trans Frederic H. Chase, Jr. (Washington, D.C.; Catholic University of American Press, 1958), 178–79 (*Orthodox Faith* 1.8).

[35] Karl Rahner, *The Trinity*, trans. Joseph Donceel (New York: Herder, 1970), 22.

[36] Apostles' Creed; Nicene Creed; Athanasian Creed; SC 2; LC 2; SA I.

[37] *HALOT*, s.v., "רוּחַ;" *DCH*, s.v., "רוּחַ."

by context (albeit the later Masoretic pointing suggests it is indefinite or anarthrous). This Hebrew word is also in absolute, not construct form. The omission of the definite article can be found in other adverbial phrases with temporal terms in an absolute sense (Isa 40:21; 41:4, 26). Isaiah 46:10 suggests that this word can also be anarthrous, absolute, and speaking of God's absolute sovereignty over the beginning and end of historical time (cf. Prov 8:23). The disjunctive tipha and vocalized shewa provide additional support for the absolute sense. The unprecedented context shows that Genesis 1:1 is referring to an absolute beginning.[38] "Created" (בָּרָא) is pointed as a finite verb, not an infinitive construct. This is the only place where a finite verb follows "in the beginning" (בְּרֵאשִׁית). "The heavens and earth" (הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֵת הָאָרֶץ) are a merism. Their focus is on the totality of everything that God created in Genesis 1:1 rather than the completeness of the "heavens and earth" in this verse (cf. Col 1:16). The unprecedented context warrants this unique understanding here.[39]

Genesis 1:2 is a complete sentence that describes the state of what God created from nothing in Genesis 1:1. If Genesis 1:1 were a temporal clause that depended on Genesis 1:2 as its main clause, one would expect the later to open with waw-consecutive + verb + subject word order.[40] Not only that, the disjunctive word order of Genesis 1:2 (i.e., waw-disjunctive + noun + verb) makes the gap theory creation translation, "then the earth *became*" (וְהָאָרֶץ הָיְתָה), syntactically unlikely (cf. Gen 3:22).[41] There is no mythic battle against chaotic matter in the creation account nor any other deities to be had (Gen 1:14–18). While the created earth of Genesis 1:2 is called "desolate and empty," it is not preexistent "chaos." Unlike BDB, *DCH*, and Gesenius[18], *HALOT* rightly omits the loaded term "chaos" as a translation for תֹהוּ anywhere in the Bible (Jer 4:23–27; Isa 45:18–19), and suggests "wilderness," "wasteland," or "emptiness"

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[38] Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987), 3, 12; Paul Joüon and Muraoka Takamitsu, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, trans. Muraoka Takamitsu, 2nd ed. (Rome: Gregorian & Biblical Press, 2016), §137k; Walter Eichrodt, "In the Beginning," in *Israel's Prophetic Heritage: Essays in Honor of James Muilenburg*, ed. Bernhard W. Anderson and Walter Harrelson (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1962), 1–10; Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis Chapters 1–17*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 107n11; Alexander Sperber, *A Historical Grammar of Biblical Hebrew* (Leiden: Brill, 1966), 463–64, 627, 637. Note also that Kenneth Mathews argues "in the beginning" (בְּרֵאשִׁית) initiates history. In contrast to "beginning" (תְּחִלָּה) (Gen 13:3; 41:21; 43:18, 20), Genesis 1:1's "beginning" (רֵאשִׁית), which is often paired with "end" (אַחֲרִית) (Job 8:7; 42:12; Eccl 7:8; Isa 46:10), not only suggests that a period of time has commenced, but also that there is eschatological purpose to human history from the beginning as indicated by Isaiah 46:10. See Kenneth A. Mathews, *The New American Commentary: Genesis 1–11:26*, New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 119–22, 126–27. While Mesopotamians chronicled their deities' engagement in historical events, Bill Arnold adds this engagement occurred via parallel actions in the divine realm and remained mythic. In the Hebrew Bible, conversely, a transcendent God inaugurates history, has a plan for history, and works through history to reveal that plan. Bill T. Arnold, "The Weidner Chronicle and the Idea of History in Israel and Mesopotamia," in *Faith, Tradition, and History*, ed. A. R. Millard et al. (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1994), 129–48. See also Bernhard W. Anderson, *Creation and Chaos: The Reinterpretation of Mystical Symbolism in the Bible* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 11–42; Jakob H. Grønbæk, "Baal's Battle with Yam—A Canaanite Creation Fight," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 10, no. 33 (1985): 36.

[39] Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 15; Mathews, *The New American Commentary: Genesis 1*, 142.

[40] Mathews, *The New American Commentary: Genesis 1*, 137n98.

[41] Bruce K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *IBHS* [*IBHS*] (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990), par. 8.3b; 39.2.3.

for Genesis 1:2.[42] Lexicographical studies maintain that the "deep" (תְּהוֹם) is not based on the Akkadian feminine Tiamat. Instead both words derive from a common proto-Semitic root.[43]

Looking at Genesis 1:1–3 as a whole, all recognize that Genesis 1:3 is an independent clause. In contrast to the word order of both Genesis 2:4 and *Enūma Elish*, Genesis 1:1 word order is preposition + finite verb + subject noun. If *Enūma Elish* has any syntactical parallel, it is with Genesis 2:4–7 (preposition + non-finite verb + subject noun).[44] What is more, Genesis has stylistically shorter sentences. Translations (e.g., NRSV and NJPS),[45] which make Genesis 1:1–3 vulnerable to mythologizing by rendering these verses as a single cumbersome sentence with a temporal dependent clause, have not stood up to textual and historical scrutiny.[46] Thus, Genesis 1:1 is unique in Ancient Near East literature. If Genesis is engaging Ancient Near East cosmologies, it is far more likely that it is polemicizing against Egyptian cosmologies.[47]

Motive for Creation

If God is the sole Creator of all things, then the impelling cause (*causa impulsiva*) of creation can only be found in God as well. The Lutheran fathers maintain that God's motive for creation was his goodness.[48] The Lord is "good" (טוֹב) (Ps 136:1). There is no unrighteousness in him (Ps 92:15). Creation is a free act of God's will (Gen 1:3; Ps 115:3; Eph 1:11; Rev 4:11). The refrain "his steadfast love [חֶסֶד] endures forever" is added to his works of creation in Psalm 136:5ff. God describes his work of creation as "good" and even "very good" (Gen 1:14, 31). The Scriptures also indicate that God did not create because he lacked something. There was no internal necessity that compelled God to create (Acts 17:25). The Scriptures further maintain God did not create because he needed to gain control of something preexistent. There was no

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[42] *HALOT*, s.v.,"תְּהוֹ." The LXX never used "chaos" (χάος) to translate any of the words in Gen 1:1–3. See *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint* [*GELS*], s.v., "χάος;" Takamitsu Muraoka, *A Greek-Hebrew/Aramaic Two-Way Index to the Septuagint* (Leuven: Peeters Publishers, 2010), 127, 174.

[43] *TLOT*, s.v., "תְּהוֹם;" *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament [TDOT]*, s.v., "תְּהוֹם;" *HALOT*, s.v., "תְּהוֹם." cf. *NIDOTTE*, s.v., "תְּהוֹם." See also David Toshio Tsumura, *Creation and Destruction: A Reappraisal of the Chaoskampf Theory in the Old Testament,* rev. ed. (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2005).

[44] Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis Chapters 1–17*, 107–8; Mathews, *The New American Commentary: Genesis 1*, 142.

[45] "When God began to create heaven and earth—2 the earth being unformed and void, with darkness over the surface of the deep and a wind from God sweeping over the water—3 God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light" (Gen 1:1–3 NJPS). "In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, 2 the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. 3 Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light" (Gen 1:1–3 NRSV). See also NRSVue.

[46] Robert W. Jenson, *Systematic Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997–99), 2:3n2; Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1–11: A Commentary*, trans. John J. Scullion, Continental Commentary (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1987), 74ff

[47] Gordon H. Johnston, "Genesis 1 and Ancient Egyptian Creation Myths," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 165, no. 658 (2008): 178–94, esp. 192. See also Mathews, *The New American Commentary: Genesis 1*, 90–95; 117–120; Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 8–10; John D. Currid, "An Examination of the Egyptian Background of the Genesis Cosmogony," *Biblische Zeitschrift* 204, no. 4 (1991): 18–40; James K. Hoffmeier, "Some Thoughts on Genesis 1 and 2 and Egyptian Cosmology," *Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society* 15 (1983): 39–49.

[48] Abraham Calov, *Systema Locorum Theologicorum … exhibens* (Wittenberg: Andreas Hartmann, Johann Röhner, Michael Wendt, Christian Schroedter, and Johann Wilcke, 1655–77), 3:896–97; Johann Wilhelm Baier and C. F. W. Walther, *Compendium Theologiae Positivae Adjectis Notis Amplioribus … Confirmatur* (St. Louis: Luth. Concordia Verlag, 1879), 2:96.

external necessity that compelled him to create either (Isa 40:13; Jer 23:18). Not even the Leviathan preexisted God (Ps 104:26).

How Creation Came About

When Christians say that God created all things from nothing, "nothing" is not a name for a material of another sort. Johann Andreas Quenstedt explains,

> There was no *material* of creation *out of which*, with respect to things created on the first day. For they were created on the first day, not from preexistent material, either eternal or previously created, but were made from purely negative nothing [*ex nihilo purè negativo*]. … When it said that the works of the first day were created from nothing, the particle *from* does not designate the material out of which, but excludes it. For by *from nothing*, nothing else is denoted than the starting point [*terminus a quo*]; that is, the *nothing*, from which all things are said to have been made, has respect not to the material, but only to the starting point and ought to be understood of the order of creation, and the particle *from* can be correctly translated by *after*, so that the sense is, as Thomas [Aquinas] says, *After nothing, as the starting point, something was made*."[49]

Gerhard May maintains that creation from nothing only developed when the church fathers like Tatian, Theophilus of Antioch, and Irenaeus of Lyon had to counter the cosmologies of Greek philosophy and the Gnostics. Ironically, he also argues that the Gnostic Basilides was the first to articulate it.[50] It could just as easily be argued that these church fathers articulated creation from nothing because they were more engaged with the Scriptures than Aristides, Justin Martyr, Athenagoras, and Hermogenes as well as less interested in harmonizing the Scriptures with a Platonic cosmology (i.e., *creatio ex materia*).

As already noted in the excursus, the Scriptures implicitly teach creation from nothing already in Genesis 1. Numerous other Old Testament passages maintain that God alone is the eternal and transcendent Creator of all things and that all things depend on him. Only the Apocryphal Wisdom of Solomon 11:17 suggests that God created out formless material (ἐξ ἀμόρφου ὕλης). However, this may be speaking about the created matter that God used to complete the earth (cf. 2 Pet 3:5). The Apocryphal 2 Maccabees 7:28 is the first place to explicitly teach creation from nothing: "God did not make [the heavens and earth and … everything that is in them] out of things that existed [οὐκ ἐξ ὄντων]." However, the canonical New Testament Scriptures teach it as well. Romans 4:17 speaks of God who "calls into being that which does not exist" (καλοῦντος τὰ μὴ ὄντα ὡς ὄντα). Though not quite as strong, Hebrews 11:3 concurs, "By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that

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[49] Johann Andreas Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica, Sive Systema Theologicvm … Divisvm* (Leipzig: Thomas Fritsch, 1702), 1:417.

[50] Gerhard May, *Creatio Ex Nihilo: The Doctrine of 'Creation out of Nothing' in Early Christian Thought*, trans. A. S. Worrall (London: T&T Clark International, 2004). Unless otherwise indicated, all patristic references are to *The Writings of the Fathers Down to A.D. 325: Ante-Nicene Fathers [ANF]*, ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995) or *The Select Library of the Christian Church: Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers [NPNF]*, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995). *ANF* 2:67 (Tatian, *Address to the Greeks* 5–6); *ANF* 2:95 (Theophilus, *To Autolycus* 4); *ANF* 2:359, 370, 412 (Irenaeus of Lyon, *Against the Heresies* 2.1; 2.10; 2.34).

what is seen was not made out of things that are visible [εἰς τὸ μὴ ἐκ φαινομένων τὸ βλεπόμενον γεγονέναι]."

In some ways, scouring the Scriptures for "from nothing" is to miss the point a bit. William Weinrich explains, "Because God's free willing is the sole 'cause' of the world's creation, God is said to create *ex nihilo*, 'from nothing.' This nothing does not refer to anything outside of God from which or on which God acted. Nor does it refer to a certain void that receives a positive and material existence. This 'nothing' is rather the sovereign will of God."[51] In other words, "from nothing" really means that God created all things from an act of his will (Gen 1:3ff; Ps 115:3; Eph 1:11; Rev 4:11), power (Jer 32:17), wisdom (Ps 104:24; 136:5), and understanding (Jer 10:12). Clearly then, Biblical creation affirms the Creator-creature distinction and the creation's dependency on God. It rejects dualism, monism, and naturalism. There is also no room for Jürgen Moltmann's idea that the "nothing" is a space created by God's self-negation or a God-forsaken space.[52]

God did not create all things instantaneously. The exegetical evidence for gap theory has already been shown wanting. He also did not use evolution, day-ages, progressive creative bursts, or the like. He created in six days (Genesis 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31). To be sure, the word "day" (יוֹם) does not only mean a twenty-four hour day in the creation account. The account uses "day" to refer to the daylight hours of the six days of creation (Gen 1:5, 14, 16, 18). It also uses "day" as a general reference to time, like the expression "back in Luther's day" (cf. Gen 2:4). But there is no evidence that days of creation are understood in any other way in the creation account than these three ways. Even the first day of creation had an evening and a morning (Gen 1:15; Exod 16:8; 18:13). In fact, Exodus 20:11 confirms the fact that God created in six normal days. Psalm 90:4 and 2 Peter 3:8 do provide glimpses into what created time means for a timeless God. But the Bible describes the days of creation as six created days, not day-ages or the like.

On the first day, God created from nothing (i.e., immediate creation [*creatio immediata*] or first creation [*creatio prima*]). On the following days, he created from the material that he created from nothing on the first day (i.e., mediate creation [*creatio mediata*] or second creation [*creatio secunda*]).[53] Still, Nikolaus Hunnius rightly insists, "The bible teaches us, that, although *man* was formed of the dust of the ground, (Genes. 2, 7.); the *grass* out of the earth, (Genes. 1, 11.); fishes from the water (v. 20.) and birds and other *animals* from the earth (v. 24 and Gen. 2, 19.); they have yet been created out of nothing."[54]

Creation by God's Word

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[51] William C. Weinrich, "Creation," in *Confessing the Faith: A Lutheran Approach to Systematic Theology*, ed. Samuel H. Nafzger, John F. Johnson, David A. Lumpp, and Howard W. Tepker (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2017), 1:163.

[52] Jürgen Moltmann, *God in Creation*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 86–87.

[53] Calov, *Systema Locorum Theologicorum*, 3:903–5; David Hollaz, *Examen Theologicvm Acroamaticvm Vniversam Theologiam Thetico-Polemicam Complectens*, ed. Romanus Tellerus (Leipzig: B. C. Breitkopf, 1763), 354.

[54] Nikolaus Hunnius, *Epitome Credendorum*, trans. Paul Edward Gottheil (Nuremberg: U. E. Sebald, 1847), 44.

There is no instrumental cause of creation. God spoke reality into being. He did so via the second person of the Holy Trinity. To call Christ an instrumental cause would be Arian.[55] Abraham Calov explains this Creative Word further,

> The 'God said' denotes not merely a word of command; but inasmuch as God does not command anything or do anything except through His hypostatic Word 'through whom all things were made' (John 1:3), the term 'God said' must here, where the creation of all things is spoken of, be taken, on the one hand, as the Word by whom God the Father spoke, the hypostatic Word through whom the Father speaks and works and without whom He neither speaks nor works, and on the other hand, as the word which God spoke and uttered, the prophetic word, the word of command, as a divine impulse."[56]

Creation took place by divine fiat. God spoke all things into being via his effective Word (Gen 1:3; Isa 55:11; Joh 1:3; Heb 11:3). Clearly, this is an active, living personal God, not an unmoved mover or monist God. When God speaks, things happen, new realities come into being. God's Word is not just sacred information. It is performative as well. God's word and his deeds cannot be separated. Martin Luther put it this way in his *Lectures on Genesis* (1535–45): "'Let there be light' are the words of God, not Moses; this means that they are realities. For God calls into existence the things which do not exist (Rom. 4:17). He does not speak grammatical words; He speaks true and existent realities. Accordingly, that which among us has the sound of a word is a reality with God. Thus sun, moon, heaven, earth, Peter, Paul, I, you, etc.—we are all words of God…."[57]

Creation with a Special Focus on Anthropology

Over the course of six days, God created everything from the building blocks of creation (i.e., time, space, and matter) to its culmination (i.e., mankind) as well as everything in between. On the first day, God created heavens, earth, and light (i.e., raw materials of creation). God's work on the second day was the firmament or the expanse between the waters. On the third day, the waters were gathered to one place and dry land appeared along with various kinds of vegetation that reproduce according to their "kind" (מִין). God made the sun, moon, and the rest of the heavenly bodies on the fourth day. On the fifth day, God created the different creatures of the water and the birds of the air according to their kind. On the six day, he brought forth land animals according to their kind, and finally he created man, the crown of creation (Gen 1:26–28; Ps 8:4–9; 139:13–16). After repeatedly declaring his creation "good" (Gen 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25) and "very good" (Gen 1:31) once man was created, God rested on the seventh day. This account allows for the development of new varieties of creatures within their kinds. But the cross-kind reproduction of theistic evolution is excluded. The goodness of creation is not of its own making. Rather the good God not only gifts goodness to creation, God's goodness can be seen in creation as well.[58] Such goodness excludes all dualisms.

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[55] Calov, *Systema Locorum Theologicorum*, 3:897; Baier and Walther, *Compendium Theologiae Positivae*, 2:96–97.

[56] Calov quoted in Robert Preus, *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1970–2), 2:171–72. See also *LW* 1:47.

[57] *LW*, 1:21–22. See also *LW* 37:258.

[58] Weinrich, "Creation," 1:166.

There are also not two different creations in Genesis, but the same creation told from two different perspectives. Genesis 1 describes all the six days of creation. Genesis 2 provides more information about the creation of human beings. The specifics of the creation account demonstrate mankind's special status.[59] God's careful deliberation over man is expressed by "let us make" (Gen 1:26). Man is not just "formed" by God (Gen 2:7), he is said to be "created" (בָּרָא) three times in Genesis 1:27 alone. Just as there is only God, there is only one kind of human. The Triune God created both males and females "in our image, according to our likeness" (בְּצַלְמֵנוּ כִּדְמוּתֵנוּ), which at its core means perfect righteousness, holiness, and knowledge (Gen 1:26–27; Eph 4:24; Col 3:10). As royal priests (Exod 19:6; 20:7; 1 Pet 2:5, 9; Rev 1:6; 5:10; 20:6), males and females also have mastery and rule of creation (Gen 1:26, 28. cf. Wis 9:2; Sir 17:2). Mankind's unique relationship with the Lord God is fleshed out further in Genesis 2. He created man via a twofold process of forming and inspiring (i.e., filling with life). The Lord God took great care "to form" (יָצַר) the human of the dust from the ground and later from a rib. He himself then breathed into the man the breath of life (Gen 2:7, 21–22; Job 33:4; Ps 104:30). The word for "breath" (נִשְׁמַת) in Genesis 2:7 is only used of God and man (except possibly in Genesis 7:22). Human beings were created to live in a dependent faith-based or trust-based relationship with God (Gen 2:16–17; 3:17).[60] In contrast to mere animal instinct, they possessed personhood, self-awareness, self-reflectiveness, and the freedom to choose between various good things (Gen 2:16–17, 23).[61]

With this in mind, this study shall probe a little deeper into Biblical anthropology. Man is neither an immortal spirit or spark of the divine trapped in a body nor is he a purely material organism or a biological machine.[62] Instead he is an embodied and composite being. He is comprised of a created immaterial soul and material body (i.e., dichotomy) (Gen 2:7; Eccl 11:5; 12:7; Isa 42:5; Jer 38:16). In contrast to a dichotomy, some have argued that 1 Thessalonians 5:23 and Hebrews 4:12 prove man is a trichotomy (i.e., body, soul, and spirit composite).[63] The idea is that other forms of biological life may have a soul to animate them, but only man possesses a spirit. However, the Scriptures attribute the same characteristics to soul and spirit. They also only differentiate between soul and spirit to highlight different features of the same soul.[64] Lutherans have largely supported the traducian understanding of the soul's propagation (i.e., body and soul are both produced from the parents). The creationist understanding (i.e., God creates a new soul once procreation begins) is harder to square with the transmission of original

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[59] Adolph Hoenecke, *Evangelical Lutheran Dogmatics*, trans. James Langebartels, Heinrich Vogel, Richard A. Krause, Joel Fredrich, Paul Prange, and Bill Tackmier (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1999–2009), 2:214–15

[60] See also Walter Brueggemann on primal trust in his *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 466.

[61] Westermann, *Genesis 1–11*, 224; Mathews, *The New American Commentary: Genesis 1*, 210–11.

[62] Johann Michael Reu, *Lutheran Dogmatics*, 2nd ed. (Dubuque: Wartburg Theological Seminary, 1963), 81–86; Jerrold A. Eickmann, Jerald C. Joersz, Thomas E. Manteufel, Daniel L. Mattson, and Joel Okamoto, "Anthropology," in *Confessing the Faith: A Lutheran Approach to Systematic Theology*, ed. Samuel H. Nafzger, John F. Johnson, David A. Lumpp, and Howard W. Tepker (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2017), 1:272–75.

[63] Vilmar, *Dogmatik*, 1:333–36.

[64] Hoenecke, *Evangelical Lutheran Dogmatics*, 2:301–4; Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics,* trans. John Theodore Mueller (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950–57), 1:476.

sin from parent to the whole person of their child.[65] Ironically, Reformed theologians have insisted on the creationist understanding in part to affirm that ongoing creation is creation.[66] Sometimes the Reformed tradition's Platonizing of the Biblical concepts of spirit and flesh (Gal 5:16–26) has caused it to forget that created soul is no closer to God than created body. Created soul is neither made of God stuff, nor it is immune to fleshly vices.

What about the heart of what it means to be human? In his glosses on Johannes Tauler's sermons (ca. 1516), Luther defined the human being as "spiritual man who relies on faith" (*homo spiritualis nititur fide*).[67] Luther said that it was passive (i.e., alien righteousness) alone that make man human before God (*corum dei*) in his 1519 *Two Kinds of Righteousness*. "This righteousness is primary; it is the basis, the cause, the source" of active righteousness (i.e., good works) that only makes man human before the world (*corum mundo*).[68] In his *Disputation concerning Man* (1536), Luther states, "Paul in Romans 3[:28], 'We hold that a man is justified by faith apart from works,' briefly sums up the definition of man, saying, 'Man is justified by faith.'"[69] But what about before the fall? Luther also speaks of both righteousness and faith before the fall in his *Lectures on Genesis* (1535–45):

> Therefore the root and source of sin is unbelief and turning away from God, just as, on the other hand, the source and root of righteousness is faith. Satan first draws away from faith to unbelief. When he achieved this—that Eve did not believe the command which God had given—it was easy to bring this about also, that she rushed to the tree, plucked the fruit, and ate it.[70]

In the 1519 *Two Kinds of Righteousness*, Luther explains that original passive righteousness is basically the same as the post-fall passive righteousness except that the latter had to do more. This is because the passive righteousness necessary to cover human sin could only be based on the sole-salvific atoning work of Jesus Christ. "For this is the [passive] righteousness given in the place of the original righteousness lost in Adam. It accomplishes the same as that original righteousness would have accomplished; rather, it accomplishes more."[71] The Biblical Record concurs with Luther. Adam and Eve were in fact created in the image of God (i.e., spoken into being passively righteous) (Gen 1:31; Eph 4:24). They were also called into a faith-relationship with God (Gen 2:16–17).

Thus, it has always been faith and passive righteousness alone that makes man fully human. Granted the fallen man remains human (Gen 3:9, 22), loved by God (John 3:16), and his good creation (Ps 8:5–9; 24:1; 50:12; 139:13–16; 1 Cor 10:26). He also retains God-given dignity (Gen 9:6; 1 Cor 11:7; Jam 3:9). However, fallen man has become a deformed human

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[65] FC SD I, 7, 30; *LW* 54:401. See also Hoenecke, *Evangelical Lutheran Dogmatics*, 2:309–313.

[66] *Synopsis of a Purer Theology*, ed. William den Boer and Riemer A. Faber (Landrum: Davenant Press, 2023), 133–34; Johannes Wollebius, "Compendium Theologiae Christianae," in *Reformed Dogmatics*, trans. John W. Beardslee (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1977), 57–58.

[67] Martin Luther, *Dr. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe* [WA], ed. J. K. F. Knaake et al. (Weimar: Böhlau, 1883–1993), 9:103–4.

[68] *LW* 31:297–306, esp. 298.

[69] *LW* 34:139.

[70] *LW* 1:162; etc. FC SD V, 17 concurs, "Since unbelief is a root and fount of all sins worthy of condemnation, the law also condemns unbelief." Robert Kolb adds, "Trust in the creator holds life together." Robert Kolb, *The Christian Faith: A Lutheran Exposition* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1993), 55–56.

[71] *LW* 31:298–99.

(Gen 6:5; 8:21; Ps 51:7; 143:2; Isa 6:5; Jer 17:9; Rom 5:12–21; 14:23; Heb 11:6) who treats others in dehumanizing and animalistic ways (Gen 4; Ezek 34). He suffers from an identity crisis because he has rooted his identity in what he does (i.e., lack of active righteousness or good works [Luke 10:29; 16:15]) rather than what God has made him. He lacks true human freedom (except in matters of civil righteousness) because he has forfeited it for license and enslaved himself to sin (John 8:34).

Underneath a supposed "superadded" gift of original righteousness, Roman Catholic theologians have posited the existence of a state of pure nature in human beings.[72] Enlightenment thinkers went further and claimed the human individual was actually "autonomous" (i.e., independent of external forces and legislating rules for oneself).[73] In contradistinction, Genesis maintains that the human faculties (e.g., memory, intellect, and will, etc.) were only created to function properly with passive righteousness and faith. This is why Luther concluded that reasoning apart from grace and faith is intellectual fornication in the *Heidelberg Disputation* (1518):

> 29. He who wishes to philosophize by using Aristotle without danger to his soul must first become thoroughly foolish in Christ. 30. Just as a person does not use the evil of passion well unless he is a married man, so no person philosophizes well unless he is a fool, that is, a Christian. … Just as lust is the perverse desire for pleasure, so philosophy is the perverse love of knowing unless the grace of Christ is present…. To philosophize outside of Christ is the same as fornicating outside of marriage….[74]

The Garden in Eden, the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, and the "Tree of Life" (עֵץ הַחַיִּים) serve as a sort of Edenic temple and Torah-filled ark. The later temporary tabernacle/temples, not to mention the eschatological (i.e., already but not yet) new temple, all echo this original Edenic temple.[75] It appears that Adam and Eve were kept in a righteous

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[72] Robert Bellarmine, *Omnia Opera*, ed. Justinus Fèvre (Paris: Vives, 1870–74), 5:179; Francisco Suarez, *Omnia Opera* (Paris: Vivès, 1856–61), 7:179; Matthias Scheeben, *Handbook of Catholics Dogmatics*, trans. Michael J. Miller (Steubenville: Emmaus Academic, 2019–23), bk 3, par. 507, 591, 947, 1072–74, 1082–83, 1120–22; Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, *The Three Ages of the Interior Life*, trans. M. Timothea Doyle (Rockford: TAN Books, 1947–48), 1:288. See also Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 1:1124–25 (pt. 1-2, q. 109, art. 2).

[73] Immanuel Kant, *Practical Philosophy*, trans. Mary Gregor, The Cambridge edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant (Cambridge: Cambridge: University Press, 1996), 166ff (AA 5:33ff).

[74] WA 1:355; 59:410. The first two numbered thesis are translated in *LW* 31:41. The last two unnumbered points come from the untranslated proofs to the philosophical theses found in WA 59:410.

[75] Ezekiel and John both situate the new temple in a new Eden or the new heavens and the new earth (Gen 1:1; 2:8; Ezek 36:35; Ezek 40–48; Rev 21:1, 22). The later temporary tabernacle/temples are where the Lord would dwell with his people and impart his life-sustaining temple presence to his people by means of a sort of tree of life; namely, the Torah-filled ark of the covenant (Gen 2:9, 16–17, 3:8; Exod 3:1–22; 25:8, 22, 31–40; Lev 26:12; Deut 23:15; 2 Sam 7:6–7; Prov 3:18–20; Ezek 28:14; John 14:6; 1 Cor 1:24; Col 2:3; 2 Tim 3:15; Rev 2:7; 21:3, 22; 22:2, 14; 19). While no atonement was necessary before the fall into sin, Adam was created as an Adamic priestly prophet to mediate God's Edenic temple presence (Gen 2:9, 16–17, 20) to Eve and their descendants, the other members of this royal priesthood (Gen 1:26–28; 2:18–25; Exod 19:6; 20:7; 1 Pet 2:5, 9; Rev 1:6; 5:10; 20:6), which maintained them all in the image of God and a faith-relationship with him. Since cherubim will assume the role of human beings after the fall, Ezekiel 28:11–19 may indirectly depict Adam in high priestly attire. The rest of this kingdom of priests were to assist Adam in the priestly duties of mediating temple presence, offering the Eucharistic sacrifices (i.e., thank offerings of "cultivating/serving" [עָבַד] and "keeping/guarding" [שָׁמַר] of Eden [Gen 2:15; Num 3:7–8; 8:25–26; 18:5–6; 1 Chr 23:32; Ezek 44:14; Rom 12:1; 1 Pet 2:5]), and reflecting the divine image and making God's name holy among each other through their helping (Gen 2:20). They further assisted Adam in the royal duties of

relationship with the divine via God's life-giving Word and the sacrament of the tree of life (Gen 2:16). Man's ongoing need for a sacrament life was baked into reality from the start. Luther writes again in the Genesis lectures:

> So, then, this tree of the knowledge of good and evil, or the place where trees of this kind were planted in large number, would have been the church at which Adam, together with his descendants, would have gathered on the Sabbath day. And after refreshing themselves from the tree of life he would have praised God and lauded Him for the dominion over all the creatures on the earth…. Adam would have extolled the greatest gift, namely, that he, together with his descendants, was created according to the likeness of God. He would have admonished his descendants to live a holy and sinless life, to work faithfully in the garden, to watch it carefully, and to beware with the greatest care of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This outward place, ceremonial, word, and worship man would have had; and later on he would have returned to his working and guarding until a predetermined time had been fulfilled, when he would have been translated to heaven with the utmost pleasure.[76]

Human beings are created to be types of their uncreated archetype. As a result, they cannot help but reflect the divine image and make God's name holy. This occurs via their royal priestly acts and in accord with their vocations (Gen 1:28; 2:15, 18; 3:16–19; Rom 13:1–7; 1 Cor 11:7; 12:28–30; Eph 4:11; 5:21–6:9) and gifts (Rom 12:1–8; 1 Cor 12:1–11). In contrast to the passive righteousness which alone frees man from sin, death, and devil; the purpose of active righteousness has always been to freely serve the neighbor and thank God for what has already been gifted to him (i.e., faith and passive righteousness). Active righteousness could never merit what only a divine act of creation (בָּרָא) could bestow. In contrast to Reformed Covenant Theology's covenant of works[77] and its justification via law,[78] the law was never meant to be a

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mastery and rule of creation (Gen 1:26, 28). Cherubim assumed this role of temple guards after the fall (Gen 3:22–24; Exod 25:18–22; Ezek 1:5; 10:4). Eden seems to have a tripartite structure (Eden, garden, and world) like the temple (holy of holies, holy place, and courtyard). Eden faced east just like Ezekiel's new temple (Gen 3:24; Ezek 28:14–16; 40:6; 43:4). The temporary tabernacle/temples were to face east and were later situated on a mount just like Ezekiel's temple (Num 2:2–3; 3:38; Ezek 40:2). They had furnishings (Exod 35:31), carvings (1 Kgs 6:18, 29, 32, 35; 7:18–20), and gold and onyx that were reminiscent of the garden (Gen 2:11–12; Exod 25:7, 11, 17, 31). A river flowed out from Eden just like the new temple (Gen 2:10; Ezek 47:1–12; Rev 22:1–2). This river became four, one of which was named "Gihon" (גִּיחוֹן) (Gen 2:13; 2 Chr 32:30; 1 Kgs 1:33, 38, 45; 2 Chr 33:14). Creation concluded with the sanctification of Sabbath to signify the gracious relationship and rest that God created for all. The tabernacle also concluded with rest (Gen 2:2–3; Exod 31:12–17; Ezek 20:12–13). Jon Levenson, "The Temple and World," *The Journal of Religion* 64, no. 3 (1984): 275–98; Gordon J. Wenham, "Sanctuary Symbolism in the Garden of Eden Story," *Proceedings of the World Congress of Jewish Studies* 9 (1986): 19–25; G. K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 617–21; Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 65; Marvin A. Sweeney, *Reading Ezekiel: A Literary and Theological Commentary*, Reading the Old Testament Commentary Series (Macon: Smyth & Helwys, 2013), 31, 36, 43. Daniel I. Block raises some criticisms of this idea in "Eden: A Temple? A Reassessment of the Biblical Evidence," in *From Creation to New Creation: Biblical Theology and Exegesis: Essays in Honor of G. K. Beale*, eds. Daniel M. Gurtner and Benjamin L. Gladd (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2013): 3–30.

[76] *LW* 1:105–106. See also Gerhard, *On Creation*, 306 (locus 11, par. 114–15); Brochmand, *Systematis Universae Theologiae*, 1:294–97.

[77] *Die Bekenntnisschriften der reformierten Kirche*, ed. E. F. K. Müller (Waltrop: Hartmut Spenner, 1999), Irish Articles XXI; Westminster Confession VII & XIX; Helvetic Consensus Formula VIII. See also Dudley Fenner, *Sacra Theologica … Pietam*, 2nd ed. (n.p.: Eustathium Vignon, 1586), 39; Wollebius, "Compendium," 64; Johannes Cocceius, *The Doctrine of the Covenant and Testament of God*, trans. Casey Carmichael (Grand Rapids:

means of meriting the confirmation of one's bliss, much less earning salvation. Luther explains in the *Freedom of the Christian* (1520):

> We should think of the works of a Christian who is justified and saved by faith because of the pure and free mercy of God, just as we would think of the works which Adam and Eve did in Paradise, and all their children would have done if they had not sinned. We read in Gen. 2[:15] that "The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it." Now Adam was created righteous and upright and without sin by God so that he had no need of being justified and made upright through his tilling and keeping the garden; but, that he might not be idle, the Lord gave him a task to do, to cultivate and protect the garden. This task would truly have been the freest of works, done only to please God and not to obtain righteousness, which Adam already had in full measure and which would have been the birthright of us all. The works of a believer are like this. Through his faith he has been restored to Paradise and created anew, has no need of works that he may become or be righteous; but that he may not be idle and may provide for and keep his body, he must do such works freely only to please God. Since, however, we are not wholly recreated, and our faith and love are not yet perfect, these are to be increased, not by external works, however, but of themselves.[79]

Immanuel Kant regarded the fall to be an evolutionary leap from animality towards autonomous human rationality, freedom, and moral consciousness.[80] But genuine human rationality, freedom, moral consciousness can only be found in a dependent relationship with God. Not only were Adam and Eve created with perfect righteousness, holiness, and knowledge, they had real potential to grow in God. The Scriptures say that Christ himself grew in wisdom (Luke 2:52).[81] It is the pre-fallen man that had the graced human faculties to choose freedom or condemn himself to license (Gen 3:6). Fallen man lacks graced human faculties and only has the power to choose between civil righteousness (Rom 2:14–15) and license until he is recreated (Gen 6:5; 8:21; Ps 51:7; 143:2; Isa 6:5; Jer 17:9; Rom 5:12–21; 14:23; Heb 11:6). Fallen man is like a drug addict who thinks he can quit the drug of sin at any time. Thus, it is the image of God which allows human beings to realize their individual identity and freedom first of all in a trust-based relationship with God, and secondarily in a trust-based relationship with the neighbor. Finally, the goal posts of the law and needs of the neighbor spell out the true moral limits of freedom (Gen 2:16–17; 4:7). Luther states against the Antinomians in the Genesis lectures:

Reformation Heritage Book, 2016), esp. 27–57; Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, trans. George Musgrave Giger (Phillipburg: P&R Publishing, 1992–97), 1:574–78; Petrus van Mastricht, *Theoretical-Practical Theology*, trans. Todd M. Rester (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Book, 2018–), 3:369–403; Heinrich Heppe, *Reformed Dogmatics*, trans. G. T. Thomson (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2007), 281–300; Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (New York: Charles Scribner, 1872–73), 2:117–22; Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003–8), 2:563–76.

[78] Johann Heinrich Heidegger, *The Concise Marrow of Theology*, trans. Casey Carmichael (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Book, 2019), 64.

[79] *LW* 31:360. See also Abraham Calov, *Theologia Positiva ... Ceu Compendium Systematics Theologici* (Frankfurt and Wittenberg: Johann Ludolph Quenstedt, 1690), 274–75; Hoenecke, *Evangelical Lutheran Dogmatics*, 2:330–36.

[80] Immanuel Kant, *Anthropology, History, and Education*, trans. Mary Gregor et al., The Cambridge edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant (Cambridge: Cambridge: University Press, 2007), 164–69 (AA 8:110–15).

[81] Hoenecke, *Evangelical Lutheran Dogmatics*, 2:326–30. See also *LW* 1:110–11, 113.

But I also stated above why Adam had need of this command concerning the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, namely, that there should be an outward form of worship and an outward work of obedience toward God. The angel Gabriel, too, is without sin, a very pure and guiltless creature. And yet he accepts from God the command to instruct Daniel about very important matters (Dan. 8:16) and to announce to Mary that she will be the mother of Christ, who had been promised to the fathers (Luke 1:26). These are in truth commands which were addressed to a guiltless being. … But Paul is speaking of another Law; for he clearly states that he is speaking about the Law which was not given to the just but to the unjust. Who, then, is either so ignorant or so deranged as to conclude from this that no Law was given to Adam when he hears it stated that Adam was righteous? For nothing else follows from this than that the Law given to the unrighteous is not the same Law that was given to righteous Adam. Moreover, when a Law is given to righteous Adam, it follows that this is a different Law from the one which later was given to the unrighteous.[82]

Since man was created as a finite, social, and trust-based creature, the Lord God notes that it is not "good" (טוֹב) for the man to be "alone" (בַּד). He needs a "helper" (עֵזֶר) "corresponding to him" (כְּנֶגְדּוֹ).[83] The Lord God creates woman to facilitate human social and procreative needs (Gen 1:28; 2:18–25; 3:17). It would be a mistake to assume that "helpers" are inferior or unequal with those they assist. God himself served as a "helper" of mankind (Gen 49:25; Exod 18:4; Ps 10:14; 54:6, etc.). What is more, God's role as a helper of mankind indicates that it is not just husbands that need helpers. All human beings need helpers corresponding to them.[84] This means complementarity, subordination, and even hierarchy were not contrary to human equality in Eden (Gen 2:18; 1 Cor 15:28).[85] In fact, human societies cannot function without individuals assuming different roles (Rom 12:3–5; 1 Cor 12:12–31) because human beings are finite, social, trust-based creatures who have different gifts and interests. Differences in roles are not the result of the fall. Rather an asocial desire to eliminate asymmetrical relationships altogether in the name of autonomy (Gen 3:1–8) caused the fall. The resulting fallout was the debasement of God, the dehumanization of human beings (Gen 5:1–3; 6:5; 8:21; 9:6), and disorder in the rest of creation (Gen 3:17–19).

Human beings are to live out their vocations in the context of what Luther called orders, estates, or hierarchies (*Ordnungen*, *Stiftungen*, or *Hierarchien*). These are spheres of relationships where God has given one benevolent authority over another who is to act in Christ-like submission (1 Cor 15:28), but where both also have mutual responsibilities or duties to each other. The Scriptures speak of three of these estates: the church (Gen 2:16; 1 Cor 14:40), the home (Gen 2:18, 20–25; Eph 5:24; Col 3:18; Tit 2:5; 1 Pet 3:1, 5; Luke 2:51; Eph 6:1–3; Tit 2:9; 1 Pet 2:18), and the state (Rom 13:1, 5; Tit 3:1; 1 Pet 2:13), which is fleshed out in the *Small Catechism's* Table of Duties.[86] Nineteenth century Lutherans have also called these "Creator's orders" (*Schöpferordnungen*) or "orders of creation" (*Schöpfungsordnungen*) because some of

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[82] *LW* 1:109. The Formula of Concord agrees, "For our first parents did not live without the law even before the fall. This law of God was written into the heart, for they were created in the image of God." FC Ep VI, 2. See also Calov, *Theologia Positiva*, 270–74.

[83] *HALOT*, 3rd ed., s.v., "נֶגֶד;" *DCH*, s.v., "נֶגֶד."

[84] Westermann, *Genesis 1–11*, 227.

[85] Mathews, *The New American Commentary: Genesis 1*, 213–14.

[86] SC 6; Klaus Detlev Schulz, *Theological Anthropology and Sin*, Confessional Lutheran Dogmatics (Ft. Wayne: The Luther Academy, 2023), 223–32.

these relationships are explicitly linked with creation in the Scriptures (1 Cor 11:3–16; 1 Tim 2:11–14). Commenting on Genesis 2:16, Luther recounts the emergence of three of these spheres of relationships,

> Here we have the establishment of the church before there was any government of the home and of the state; for Eve was not yet created. Moreover, the church is established without walls and without any pomp, in a very spacious and very delightful place. After the church has been established, the household government is also set up, when Eve is added to Adam as his companion. Thus the temple is earlier than the home, and it is also better this way. Moreover, there was no government of the state before sin, for there was no need of it. Civil government is a remedy required by our corrupted nature. It is necessary that lust be held in check by the bonds of the laws and by penalties. For this reason, you may correctly call civil government the rule of sin.[87]

Oswald Bayer notes that Luther at times modified this assessment of the civil government. Luther also regards civil government to be an extension of the home.[88]

Purpose of Creation

The Bible says that God made creation for himself (Prov 16:4; Rom 11:36; Col 1:16). The ultimate purpose of creation was so that it would declare the glory of God (Ps 19:1; 104; 148; Rev 4:11). Its intermediate purpose was to be of use and benefit to human beings (Psa 115:16). In addition to inhabiting it (Isa 45:18; Acts 17:26), humans were to be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, subdue, and have dominion over it (Gen 1:26, 28).

Continued Creation

In contrast to modern Lutheran systematic theologies, early modern ones felt the need to give far more attention to continued creation than they did creation.[89] As already noted, immediate creation or first creation concluded with the first day. Mediate creation or second creation concluded with the sixth day. But Lutherans also regard providence (Gen 1:11–12; 8:22; Neh 9:6: Matt 5:45, 6:26; Acts 14:17; 17:25; Col 1:17; Heb 1:3) or continued creation (*creatio continua*) to be an act of creation.[90] God continues to create even after the fall by bringing forth new life, preserving his creation, and governing it. This applies to both the regenerate and unregenerate alike (Matt 5:45).

As noted earlier, the Scriptures use the verb "to create" (בָּרָא) to refer to God's continued creation or providence too. The Psalmist speaks of people who are yet to be born as created by God (Ps 102:18). He likewise calls all new creatures that are being brought forth created (Ps 104:30). God's creative word is not limited to first creation. It is still effecting second creation and creating from nothing (i.e., from God's will, power, wisdom, and understanding). Luther states,

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[87] *LW* 1:103–4. See also *LW* 37:363–65.

[88] Oswald Bayer, *Martin Luther's Theology: A Contemporary Interpretation*, trans. Thomas H. Trapp (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 147–52.

[89] Preus, *The Theology*, 2:167–68.

[90] Johann Conrad Dannhauer, *ΟΔΟΣΟΦΙΑ Christiana seu Theologia Positiva in certam, plenam & cohaerentem methodum redacta … proposita* (Straßburg: Friedrich Spoor, 1649), par. 307.

The Sabbath, or the Sabbath rest, denotes that God ceased in such a way that He did not create another heaven and another earth. It does not denote that God gave up preserving and governing the heaven and the earth which had already been created. For in the preceding chapter Moses very plainly informs us about the manner of the creation when he says that God had created all things through the Word: "Let the sea bring forth fish…." These words are in force until today, and for this reason we see increase without end. Therefore if the world were in existence for an infinite number of years, the effectiveness of these words would not pass away; but there would be continuous increase through the power of that Word or, to express myself so, of the original endowment.[91]

Over against epicurean chance and stoic determinism, God remains intimately involved in creation. His general omnipresence in the repletive mode upholds reality (Acts 17:28). He does not create a clockwork universe and then abandon it to the laws of nature to manage. God is free to intervene in his creation (Exod 14:21–22; 2 Kgs 2:8–14; Matt 8:23–27). Secondary causes do not prevent him from doing so.[92] At the same time, the Lutheran fathers affirmed the concursus of first and secondary causes to distinguish ongoing creation from determinism. Quenstedt states,

God not only empowers secondary causes and uphold them … but he directly enters into the action and operation of a creature in such a way that the effect is accomplished not by God alone or by the creature alone or by God in part and by the creature in part, but it is accomplished by God and creature in one complete working power with God as the universal and first cause and man as the participating and secondary cause.[93]

Lutheran continued creation or providence is not the same thing as the Neo-Calvinist doctrine of "common grace."[94] First of all, common grace is a category mistake. While continued creation or providence is an undeserved non-salvific gift from God, the Scriptures do not call this "grace" like the Neo-Calvinists do. Common grace restrains sin in Neo-Calvinist theology, but this is the function of the law, not grace. Second, common grace seems to be a way of making Reformed double predestination and limited atonement more palatable. God can be "gracious" to all through common grace, and still withhold saving grace from some (i.e., the reprobate).[95] Third, common grace seems to imply that the unregenerate can do something more than civil righteousness, albeit not good works which require faith. It likewise fosters an optimistic view of cultural progress. In the Arminian tradition, common grace can refer to a prevenient grace which allows the human free will to synergistically chose God and cooperate in conversion.

Recreation

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[91] *LW* 1:75. See also *LW* 54:400.

[92] Philipp Melanchthon, *The Chief Theological Topics: Loci Praecipui Theologici 1559*, trans. J. A. O. Preus, 2nd ed. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2011), 41ff (locus 2).

[93] Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica*, 1:531.

[94] Abraham Kuyper, *Common Grace*, ed. Jordan J. Ballor and Stephan J. Grabill (Bellingham: Lexham Press, 2015–20); Herman Bavinck, "Common Grace," *Calvin Theological Journal* 24, no. 1 (1989): 35–65; Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, rev. ed. (Carlisle: Banner of Truth, 2023), 444–60.

[95] Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, 3:154; Steven P. Mueller, ed., *Called to Believe, Teach, and Confess: An Introduction to Doctrinal Theology* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2005), 168.

As previously stated, the Scriptures also use the verb "to create" (בָּרָא) to refer to the already but not yet recreation of man that takes place in justification. Just as the first man was forensically spoken into being from nothing and passively righteous, so too the believer is forensically spoken into being from nothing and passively righteous. As Luther would put it, God's words call into existence the new realties they declare. While this recreation happens already in forensic justification, the believer's full creation does not happen until the last day.

The Psalmist says, "Create in me [בְּרָא־לִי] a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me" (Psa 51:10). The New Testament uses the noun "creation" (κτίσις) and the verb "to create" (κτίζω) for the recreation of the human being. Paul insists that believers are already "new creations" in 2 Corinthians 5:17: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, *he is* a new creation. The old passed away; behold the new has come [καινὴ κτίσις· τὰ ἀρχαῖα παρῆλθεν, ἰδοὺ γέγονεν καινα]." He says that believers are already "created in Christ Jesus for good works" (κτισθέντες ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ ἐπὶ ἔργοις ἀγαθοῖς) (Eph 2:10). "By abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances," Paul says, "[Christ] might create [κτίσῃ] in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace (Eph 2:15). Finally, Paul connects recreation with the new man and restored image of God in Ephesians 4:24.

There are few better ways to close a reflection on creation than Martin Franzmann's poetic summary of creation in his hymn "Thy Strong Word."

Thy strong Word did cleave the darkness;
At Thy speaking it was done.
For created light we thank Thee,
While Thine ordered seasons run.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Praise to Thee who light dost send!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia without end![96]

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[96] Evangelical Lutheran Synod, *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary* (St. Louis: MorningStar Music Publishers, 1996), hymn 72:1.