



Provided by the Church of the Lutheran Confession - Board of Missions

## A Systematic Study of Bible Teachings (Dogmatics) Lesson 3.3 – The Doctrine of Creation

### The Perfection of God's Original Creation

**“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth”** (Genesis 1:1). God created absolutely everything there is in the whole universe, everything out in space and everything under the earth and everything in the seas. God created all those things that man has not yet discovered or uncovered, such as what is in the core of the earth or what galaxies there may be beyond the reach of the most powerful instruments invented. There is always more to learn about God's creation.

It is clear that God created the world as a home for mankind. God did not create the man or the woman until He had created everything else in preparation for them. The man and the woman are the only created beings that He created in His own image. The prophet Isaiah declared: **“Thus says the LORD, who created the heavens, who is God, who formed the earth and made it, who has established it, who did not create it in vain, who formed it to be inhabited”** (Isaiah 45:18).

When God created human beings, both male and female, He said: **“Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth”** (Genesis 1:26). After God made the human beings, God blessed them and told them: **“Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth”** (Genesis 1:28). It is clear then that in God's view, the universe is earth-centered, and the earth is man-centered. Therefore, we must reject any idea that nature and man are equal or that man and animals are equal. God Himself put human beings over the animals and over everything that He created.

The Genesis account of creation emphasizes that God's original creation was good. The word **“good”** appears seven times in Genesis 1. When God finished creation, we read: **“Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good”** (Genesis 1:31). Sin, pain, suffering, sickness, and death are not good. For this reason, we can be sure that there was no sin or evil or imperfections of any kind in God's original creation. The theory of evolution requires death and the survival of the fittest, but there was no death in the world until after the first man and woman were created and they then fell into sin. The Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:8) must have been the most beautiful home. It is beyond all human imagination. Moses, the author God chose to give us the creation account, wrote a song with these words: **“Ascribe greatness to our God. He is the Rock, His work is perfect; for all His ways are justice, a God of truth and without injustice; righteous and upright is He”** (Deuteronomy 32:3-4).

We today should join the 24 elders in praising the God of creation: **“You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created”** (Revelation 4:11).

As good as creation was, the creation is not God. Materialists make physical matter their god. Today nothing is as good as it was when God first made it. Gnostics, on the other hand, claim that physical matter is evil. They say that a good God would not have anything to do with creating physical matter. They believed an evil being must have created the physical world.

When sin entered the world, as recorded in Genesis 3, the whole universe was affected in a negative way. God's creation was no longer perfect. As a result of his sin, God told Adam: **"Cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return"** (Genesis 3:17-19).

Even in this corrupted world **"the heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork,"** (Psalm 19:1), but the world is not now as it once was. When man fell into sin, God changed the world so that it was no longer a perfect world intended for perfect human beings. It became a very imperfect world fit for imperfect human beings. The apostle Paul explains it like this: **"For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now"** (Romans 8:20-22).

Just as there is a hope for glorious liberty for the children of God in the future world, so also there is hope for creation. In some way all created things will be **"delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God."** Peter compares this to the flood in Noah's time. He tells us that even as **"the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water,"** so also **"the heavens and the earth which now exist are...reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men"** (2 Peter 3:6-7). The world as we now know it will be destroyed, but **"nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells"** (2 Peter 3:13). This will be like the perfect righteousness that was present in God's original creation.

### Questions

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1. What is all included in the heavens and the earth that God created?
2. For what purpose did God create the universe?
3. What difference is there between human beings and all other created things?
4. Why do we say that the universe is earth-centered and the earth is man-centered?
5. How do we know that the original world was without sin or death?
6. What did God have to say about His creation after He finished it?
7. Why is the world today no longer perfect?
8. Why did God subject all of His creation to futility?
9. When will creation be delivered from this futility?
10. What did God use to destroy His original creation?
11. What will God use to destroy our present universe?