

## The Doctrine of Creation

### Lecture Outline

#### 1] What the doctrine is not: it is not emanationism

- the notion that the universe emanates or issues from God's nature, therein possessing the same nature as God;
- the notion that the universe issues involuntarily or inevitably, God never having *willed* the creation;
- the distinction between creation and emanationism is reflected in the dist'n b. *monotheism* and *monism*; (Monism is obviously akin to pantheism and the New Age mentality.)

#### What the doctrine is not: it is not dualism

- the notion that the universe is made by something (someone) independent of God
- dualism arises because of the presence, power and scope of evil
- with dualism, the world is made out of something outside of God that existed eternally or spontaneously came into being
- the universe is something that God has to contend with himself.

#### What the doctrine is not: it is not gnosticism

- matter is loathesome and the body is the seat of sin
- creation is tainted
- not God but an inferior deity, the demiurge, created (the demiurge is ignorant of God and hostile to God)
- gnosticism issues in two outlooks foreign to the Hebrew mind: rigid asceticism and profligate libertinism.

#### 2] The doctrine itself:

- in his freedom God wills that there be something other than himself (God is under no constraint to create)
- in his love .....: creation is an expression of God's goodness
- the world God made is GOOD; this goodness, while contradicted in the Fall, perdures.
  
- God creates *ex nihilo*: God is therefore sovereign, LORD of the creation
- as sovereign LORD, what he has created he can also destroy.

#### 3] How does God create?

- by the Word
- through Christ (since the Word is rendered incarnate in Christ)
  
- a crucial point: How do we know that the creation *isn't God*? (Many people think it is.)
- only by revelation of the Word do we know this
- then knowledge of God the Creator always follows knowledge of God the Redeemer
- where this point is not grasped the creation is either shunned as bad or idolized as divine

## 4] Creation and covenant are related:

- covenant is God's promise ever to be our God, never to fail us or forsake us; i.e., despite our sin, God is faithful to us.
- God wills a people for himself; for there to be a people who live for the praise of God's glory, God has to create (i) people (ii) all that sustains people.
- in other words, creation is the external basis of the covenant, while covenant is the internal meaning of the creation.

## 5] Creation and the kingdom of God:

- the kingdom is the creation *healed*
- note Jesus' preoccupation with the kingdom
- what does it mean that we are to pray every day for the *coming* of a kingdom that is *already here*? (wherever Christ the king is present, the kingdom is present)

## 6] The Creation of humankind:

- hk. is the crown of creation: "*very good*"
- hk. is made on the same "day" as the animals
- hk. alone is made in the image of God (what this is never stated in scripture; we must infer it from scripture as a whole)
- hk. is made steward of the creation
- hk. is sexually differentiated
- hk., fallen as it is, can never fall into sub-humanness: the image of God is *defaced*, but never *effaced*.
- faith renders hk. authentically human, but not superhuman
- since hk. is made by God for God, the quintessential human activity is PRAYER.

Note how a doctrine of creation differs from idol-environmentalism.

- On the one hand, it's good to be environmentally concerned: we need vegetable/animal life to survive, while it doesn't need us. Still, when a concern for "nature" is elevated idolatrously,
- i) nature-worship has supplanted the worship of God
  - ii) human existence is now thought to subserve nature instead of *vice versa*
  - iii) there is no awareness of where nature-worship leads: immorality and cruelty
  - iv) there is no awareness that creation can be fulfilled only in Christ
  - v) there is no awareness that humankind, while irreducibly bodily, is also spiritual; in fact spirit (the capacity for relationship with God) is what distinguishes hk.