

Instruction In The Westminster Standards

The Historic Standards of Presbyterian Denominations.

STUDIES IN THE WESTMINSTER SHORTER CATECHISM

Q. 9. What is the work of creation?

A. The work of creation is, God's making all things of nothing, by the word of his power, in the space of six days, and all very good.

Scripture References: Heb. 11:3. Rev. 4:11. Gen. 1:1-31. Ps. 33:6. Jn. 1:3.

Questions:

1. Why is it important to study the doctrine of creation?
The work of creation is the basis of all revelation. It has been well said that if a person can accept "In the beginning God . . ." it will be possible for him to accept the rest of the Bible by faith.
2. How can we know that the first verse of the Bible is true?
"By faith we understand that the worlds have been framed by the word of God . . ." (Heb. 11:3). We start with the Biblical point of view that God is sovereign and creation is a basic doctrine.
3. Why did God create the world?
He created it for His own pleasure, for His glory. It was a free act of God and He did not need the world, but rather He existed in complete self-sufficiency prior to its creation.
4. From what did God make the world?
God created the world out of nothing. Bavinck states in "Our Reasonable Faith": "The expression 'out of nothing' can be taken in a useable sense and can perform excellent service over against all kinds of heresy. For it denies that the world was made out of some stuff or matter or energy which co-existed eternally alongside of God. According to Scripture, God is not solely He who formed the world but also He who created it." (Pgs. 166-167)
5. How can we know there was no pre-existing material?
The Bible does not mention any pre-existing matter, and it also states that God created everything that has ever been. (Neh. 9:6. Col. 1:16).
6. How long did it take God to create the world?
The Bible states it took God six days. This could mean a day of twenty-four hours though this is not the only possible interpretation. The first chapter of Genesis was not written in order to satisfy our curiosity or to answer all of our questions.
7. What is the order of God's creation?
The order of God's creation is: First Day, Light; Second Day, Firmament; Third Day, Dry Land, Grass; Fourth Day, Sun and Moon; Fifth Day, Fish and Fowl; Sixth Day, Land Animals and Man. God created the world and all creatures in six days and rested the Sabbath day to hallow it for Himself and for His children.

HOW GREAT THOU ART!

Not long ago I stood in the pulpit of a church that has the unique, and effective practice of commencing their evening service with the singing of "How Great Thou Art!"

"O Lord my God! When I in awesome wonder
Consider all the works Thy hand hath made,
I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder,
Thy pow'r through-out the universe displayed:
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to Thee
How great Thou art, How great Thou art!"

As I listened I could not help but send a prayer heavenward, a prayer bathed in awe at the works of such a God. And immediately the thought came to me again that wonder of wonders, He was my God through faith in Jesus Christ! As I preached The Word that night there was a peace under-girding my words, a peace founded upon the words, "My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth."

This Question of our Catechism is one that should enable all of us to take heart, no matter what sort of difficulty or trouble we might have in these days. No matter what the distress might be, through it all we can know that the same almighty power of God, which was put into operation in the creation of all things, will be exerted in defence and support of His church and His people in the time of their need.

Many years ago in a Bible camp I remember singing a song that had in the chorus these words: "The God who doeth wonders is just the same today!" If we start, theologically speaking, with the view that God is sovereign and did create all things out of nothing, it is time we start to act as if we really believe this with all our hearts.

May God help us to acknowledge Him as Creator and Sustainer, acknowledge Him by singing out with our souls: "How Great Thou Art!" Such an attitude will do much toward enabling us to have the peace and joy of the Lord in our hearts, in addition to the theology in our minds.

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