

Hebrews 11: 1-3: Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. ² This is what the ancients were commended for. ³ By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.

By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command!

How important is it to believe that God created the world? Is the doctrine of creation really that critical? Can't we believe in something in between, that maybe God somehow used evolution to create the world? Aren't we losing a lot of our young people, who go to school and learn about evolution and lose respect for our faith? Yes, the doctrine of creation is that important.

Have you ever played one of those games where you have to pull sticks or blocks out from a pile and hope it doesn't fall? You never start at the bottom of the pile, because you know those are the most important sticks. They are foundational. The rest of the pile stands on those bottom sticks. We shouldn't pull any pieces of doctrine out of the Bible, but some are more foundational than others. The doctrine of creation is one of those foundational doctrines.

If you believe the theory of evolution over the story of creation, can you believe in a God who has all authority over everything in heaven and on earth? Then God didn't create man, but man created God. Then ancient peoples made up stories to tell their children where the thunderstorms came from, and why the winds blow, and how human beings came to be. Different peoples made up different stories, but they all basically say the same thing. So all religions must be the same because none of them are true. They are just stories. None of them are real. That's the obvious conclusion to the theory of evolution.

If you throw out the story of creation, you have to throw out the story of our salvation as well. If we believe that man evolved from animals, then there is no such thing as original sin. There was no Adam and no Eve, who were God's perfect creatures and who disobeyed God's command and brought sin into the world. Then there was no God standing between Satan and his created children and promising them a Savior. In fact, if man is improving with every generation, why would man need a Savior? Then Jesus is just another religious teacher to be admired but ignored. Then beyond this life, there is no hope.

What else do you have to throw out if you don't believe that God created the world? You have to throw out marriage and the whole purpose of sexuality to preserve the intimacy of the marriage bond. When Jesus taught about marriage and the permanence of marriage, he referred back to the creation story and God's purpose for marriage. But if God didn't create marriage, then there are no rules that govern marriage or our sexuality. Then there are no rights or wrongs. A person's personal choices and preferences trump everything else. Does that sound familiar in our culture?

I. Do you believe in the theory of evolution?

I think too often we ask the wrong question. People ask the question, "Do you really believe that God created the world?" The accusation behind the question, of course, is that anyone who believes that God created the world is foolish. Anyone with a thinking, rational mind will of course accept the idea that the world evolved.

What if we asked the question the other way around? “Do you really believe that everything in this world evolved from nothing?” Think about that for a moment. Millions of years ago, supposedly, in some primordial swamp, suddenly, for no explainable reason, life just began. I would assume that life form would be a single cell of some kind. Animals didn’t suddenly crawl out of the swamp. A single living cell is a complex thing. Somehow, this complex thing we call life just began? And that one single form of life in a hostile environment not only came into being, but it survived more than a few moments? It not only survived, but somehow this life form found a way to replicate itself and reproduce. And then somehow cells came together and developed a heart and circulatory system and brain ... and you know the rest of the story of evolution.

Molecular biologist Michael Denton wrote, "Although the tiniest bacterial cells are incredibly small, weighing less than 10^{-12} grams, each is in effect a veritable micro-miniaturized factory containing thousands of exquisitely designed pieces of intricate molecular machinery, made up altogether of one hundred thousand million atoms, far more complicated than any machinery built by man and absolutely without parallel in the non-living world." And somehow, this life developed by chance from nothing?

I listened to a conversation recently on National Public Radio between two scientists who were discussing the theory of evolution. The one scientist posed a problem the scientists have in explaining the theory of evolution. There are apparently large gaps in the story that can’t be explained – apparent leaps of change from one form of life to another. The one scientist postulated the theory that the universe has a cosmic consciousness that seems to have pushed the development of life on this planet forward. The other scientist paused for a moment and said, “So, are you saying that the universe itself has godlike qualities?”

Is there such a thing as evolution? Yes – in a small way. God created life in this world to adapt to its environment. So squirrels in the north have more fur than squirrels in the south. The corn borer that farmers fight adapt to the newest poison on the market so that the agriculture people have to constantly come up with better pesticides. And the finches on the Galapagos Islands developed have different kinds of beaks than the finches on other islands to adapt to their environment. As a result, Darwin came up with his theory of evolution. Instead of saying, “Isn’t it wonderful how God made it possible for creatures to adapt?”, Darwin proposed that all creatures evolved from a different life form.

It’s interesting that God invites us in the Bible not only to believe, but to look around us and observe and think. What did God say to Job? Job 38: **“Where were you when I laid the earth’s foundation? Tell me, if you understand. ⁵ Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know! Who stretched a measuring line across it? ⁶ On what were its footings set, or who laid its cornerstone— ⁷ while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy?”** God continues for two chapters pointing out the wonders of the universe and the complexity of his creation. Friends, the world is just too perfect to have come into being by accident.

Do you believe in evolution? The studies in genetics in recent years and the mapping of the genome have only revealed more clearly the complexity of life. In an interview with a genetic biologist, a reporter named George Caylor asked a geneticist if he believed that this complex genetic code that makes up all life just evolved. He said, “George, nobody I know in my profession believes it evolved. It was engineered by a genius beyond genius.” He then asked him if he ever stated that in a writing or public lecture. And he answered, “No. I just say it evolved. To be a molecular biologist requires one to hold on to two insanities at all times. One, it would be insane to believe in evolution when you can see the truth for yourself. Two, it would be insane to say you don’t believe in evolution. All government work, research grants papers, big college lectures – everything would stop. I’d be out of a job.”

Why is this theory of evolution so tempting to our sinful nature? It's the same temptation that the devil used in the garden with Eve. "Did God really say that you can't choose to eat any of the fruit in the garden?" One after another, the commandments begin to fall away. Then there are no rules for marriage or sexuality. Then there is no Sabbath day. Then there is no accountability to a God who created us for himself. Then there is no guilt. Well, there is always guilt, but if we have removed God from the picture, we can just tell ourselves we are not guilty, even when we are.

II. Do you believe in a Creator?

Is there a Creator? The evolutionist will stack up evidence on one side of the argument and the creationist will stack up evidence on the other. How do you become convinced that God created the world? How do you convince your friends? Our text says simply, "**By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.**" In the final argument, no one was there when the world began. Only God was there. Only God can tell us what happened. "**Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation?**" God said to Job. The answer to that question is, "I wasn't there. No one else was there. Only God can testify to how the world we live in came to be."

Isn't it interesting that our text says, "So that what is seen was not made out of what was visible?" It's almost as if God is speaking past the time of the early Christians through the ages to Christians living today. That's the crux of the argument between evolution and creation. Evolution says that everything came from something, and creation says that everything came from something. Evolution says that everything came by chance and creation says that everything came from SOMEONE! Do you believe in a Creator?

If you do, then your life has meaning and purpose. You are not just taking up space on this planet. It means that you are "**fearfully and wonderfully made.**" Psalm 139.14 God made you on purpose. You should read the whole psalm when you are at home this week. Your worth is not determined by your IQ or what you scored on your ACT's. Your value is not measured by your beauty or your good looks. Your place in life is not determined by how much money you make or by the car you drive. You have been created by God and you are loved by God.

You are fearfully and wonderfully made! Have you ever just looked at what a wonder of creation you are? Your fingers are a master of God's creation. They are so strong and tough that you can turn nuts and bolts in your bare hand. Yet they are so gentle that they can pluck an eyelash from a child's eye. Your fingers are the most sensitive part of your body, so that you can feel a grain of salt between your fingers. But when you are turning on that nut, it feels no pain. How did that come in to being without the genius beyond genius of God's creation?

You aren't descended from pond scum. You are not an accident of nature. Your life is worth more than any animal's life because God made you in his image. He knew you before you were born. He formed you in your mother's womb. He has plans to prosper you and give you a future. Your life is not dictated by chance or by dumb luck. And when you die, you will not just turn to dust and join the circle of life by becoming plant food. God has an eternal future planned for you. God created you on purpose.

And when you fell into sin and lost your way, God redeemed you on purpose. God himself, the Son of God, came into this world to rescue you from sin. He became a fetus in the womb of a woman and was born into this hard world, crying and begging for food just like you. He felt the pains of growing up and being picked on by kids in school. He experienced the sadness of his father's death. He endured all

the results of the sins he never committed. He was rejected by his people and eventually nailed to the cross and cursed by God in heaven in your place – all the while living a perfect and spotless life as our substitute before God.

God, your Creator, did this even though he knows everything about you. Psalm 139 says, **“You have searched me, Lord, and you know me. ²You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. ³You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. ⁴Before a word is on my tongue you, Lord, know it completely.”** Imagine that. God knows everything you ever did. He knows every thought that crossed your mind. When I examine my own mind and heart, it makes me ashamed of myself beyond measure. Why has God not rejected us altogether? Why has he not destroyed us? The answer to that question is simply this. God your Creator loved you from the beginning and wants you in heaven with him.

He created you on purpose. He redeemed you on purpose. And he has a purpose for your life. Who will speak for God’s glory in the face of those who use science to deny God? Who will lead people to Jesus and to heaven? Who will declare God’s praises and be the salt and light of this world? God has a purpose for your life beyond eating and drinking and having fun till you die.

So are you pond scum or the glory of God’s creation? Are you destined to become food for the worms or waiting for heaven? Do you wish you had some reason for living or has God given you a purpose greater than yourself? If you believe in your Creator, you know that God has a purpose for you for this life and beyond. Amen.