

BC art. 12; Heb. 11:1-3; Psalm 148 “The Creation of All Things” I. The Creation of All Things II. The Purpose of All Things

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, where did everything come from? This morning we return to our BC series and we go all the way back to the beginning. How did everything get here? Why was it all made? Our consideration of the BC has led us through the deity of the 3 persons of God- now we are going to spend a few weeks looking at the creation and preservation of all things. What you believe and understand about creation has a direct impact on how you see and use the things of this world. Over the past weeks we have read of the fires in Colorado and the crippling storms of snow. Tornadoes that rip apart homes and droughts that bake the crusty earth. Why do these things bother us? Why do we as humans know that something is not right with this world? There is almost a surprise that things are messed up in creation- but only a Christian knows why everything is now broken. We also know that it was not made that way! Creation cries out as if in the pain of labor- our world is groaning under the weight of sin. But that is not to imply that God made it that way! But man in his stubborn blindness credits the world with the power to make itself. I saw an example on TV again last week- an explorer’s way was blocked by ice only to have that ice melted by rain. Instead of thanking God this explorer said- “well, if Mother Nature wants to act, who are we to stand in the way!?” Thanking mother earth- or the created order- with the blessings we receive is the epitome of idolatry! So this week we are going to find the answers to the question- where did everything come from? Our BC article spends some time on the creation of angels as well, but since we considered angels in our Advent series, we are not going to focus on them today. So we consider this theme: our Triune God created all things- visible and invisible- out of nothing for His glory and our good.

I. The Creation of the Visible Things

Our passage from Hebrews 11 begins by answering the most fundamental question this week. Where did everything come from? Heb. 11:3- The universe was created by the word of God. The Greek puts it like this- the worlds were framed by God! The word for universe here is “aeon”- a word that includes all time, space ages and world. It is very broad- it means that God made the age, era, generation, world, universe or time and space. In other words, everything that is has been made by His hands. Hebrews is clearly saying that God was

the one who began all things- and ordered everything at the very beginning. V. 3 continues- what was seen was not made out of things that are visible. The Bible clearly teaches that God did not use pre-existing matter to form the things that we see- rather that God spoke and formed everything out of nothing. As Gen. 1 opens, in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. So God created everything out of nothing in six, literal, historical days. The Roman era- and our “scientific” world- tends to believe in the eternality of matter. That the stuff used to make the world has always existed- this is necessary for those who believe in the “Big Bang” to explain this world and the cosmos. Just ask them- where did the matter come from that caused the Big Bang? And they will say it was always there. But the writer of Hebrews very clearly says God made everything out of nothing- simply by the power of His word. Children, have you ever looked on the back of your toys- or examined the box that held them? You will find something like this- Made in China. Or perhaps printed in the USA on recycled paper. Almost all of the products we use have a location and time stamped on them- they have an origin! Well, this entire world has a date and time stamped on it! Made in a certain time and by a certain person! But unlike your toys- God did not use existing material to make this world! That is why our article says that God made all things- the heaven, the earth, and all creatures out of nothing. There is no room for Theistic Evolution here- God made all- including creatures and matter itself- out of nothing! As Psalm 33:6 states, by the Word of the Lord the heavens were made, and by the breath of His mouth all their host. These verses point to a distinction between heaven and earth- and the visible and invisible. A distinction that our BC continues- that God made not only the things we see- but also many things that we do not see, including but not limited to angels. Now this BC article and Heb. 11 are articles of faith! We are called to believe this is true- that God made everything out of nothing! We could add- everything was made good and for His purpose. And when God was finished, He said- behold it is very good! But more than that- as we will see our next point- identifying the source of all things mandates the praise of Him who made them! In other words, whoever made everything has both the right to determine its proper use and deserves the recognition for making it! And specifically, today with installation, our office bearers are called to know and defend this doctrine! To protect the church from the wolves that would undermine and shipwreck the faith of others. And being an office bearer of this church and signing the form of subscription means that you do in fact believe

this- and do intend to defend this truth! But we are all called to be ready to defend our faith- to defend the hope we have within us! And our hope is build on this truth- our God created everything good and for His purpose! We have to keep in mind that we and creation are not eternal nor are we self-sufficient nor are we our own makers. We have a definite beginning- and the fact that we will continue to exist owes itself to the work of God. Since God alone is eternal- our beginning and continued existence are from Him and by His pleasure alone.

II. The Purpose of Creation

The BC continues by outlining the goal and purpose of this creation and its continued existence. As art. 12 says- this world is preserved for the service of mankind, to the end that man may serve God. And it is here that we need to clear- mankind was made to be the crown of creation. Man was given the privilege and right to rule over and exercise dominion over this created order. As I said a minute ago, whoever made everything has both the right to determine its proper use and deserves the recognition for making it! So the two-fold purpose of creation is to be used as God designed and to move all creatures to praise! So then, the created world was given to man to use, develop, enjoy and bring order to. The LORD said to Adam and Eve, rule over or fill this earth and subdue it! The creation mandate is for mankind to use the raw material of this world- to make something out of it! To bring order and beauty out of the chaos. There is a majesty that cannot be denied in a waterfall and in a forest glen. Even now- in her fallen state- our world speak of our makers praise and Psalm 19 says. And even though the fallen world tends to revert back to a state of chaos and brokenness, it is the work of man to stand in the way of this trend. To put it pointedly, there is something beautiful in the work of rebuilding. As we see down south and in Colorado- after the tornadoes and the fires- God has given man the gifts and ability to clear the land and rebuild again. This is part of our creational calling- our mandate if you will. We can also chop down trees and pump oil out of the ground for good uses. It is a fallacy that the most natural and undisturbed condition is the one that we should keep. Mankind has the responsibility to explore, develop and cultivate this world. To bring order- if you will. There is a beauty to the endless rows of corn standing in perfect order. As governors of this creation, we can use the resources God had deposited without a guilty conscience. But it must also be said, that exploitation and abuse of this world is not proper either.

Rather, we are to protect those whom God has placed under us- while using their gifts and talents- all for the glory of God. That is what being a steward mean. This creation is supposed to help us in our service- and help us glorify God! Protecting and using- not fearing this creation. Being stewards frees us to use wisely- to manage- all the while confessing that this world remains our Father's! It is in this creation- and by our use of it- that God's visible attributes are made clear- and our Maker is praised! This world has been given to us for our good- for our benefit! Our article puts it like this- creatures and this created order are made to serve man- so that man might serve God! So we can keep warm and well fed over these winder months- knowing that this world gives up its increase for our benefit and blessing! But we are not the ones who made it so! We have seen in recent weeks- all three persons of the Trinity were active in creation- and by God's hand all things in heaven and earth were made. As the Father created, the Son was actively bringing His Father's plan into fruition by the power of the hovering Holy Spirit. And acknowledging this fact- that God made all things- moves us to praise Him for all that He has made. This fact keeps us humble and dependant on the One who did create it all! In fact, as Col. 1 puts it, all thing were made through Christ and for Christ! Creation is a work performed by the Son- and the purpose of the creation is to bring the Son glory! By Him- by Christ all things were created. And for Christ- for His glory- they were made! For any created thing to be used to dishonor the Son is to use that object for the exact opposite reason it was made! So our creator is also our redeemer! The hands that made the world are the same hands that were nailed to the cross! Such is the glory of our God!

All of creation- and particularly mankind- was created to glorify God. As I Cor. 10 says- whatever you do, do it to the glory of God. That is why we read from Psalm 148. All creation has a shared job- a communal focus- to praise and glorify God their maker! To sing their creator praise! The creatures themselves are called to serve God in their various functions our article states. From the sun and the moon to the stars in the sky! The waters above and the waters below. Mountains and hills, trees and flowers. Beasts of the earth and fish of the sea. Young ladies and old men- let them all praise the name of the LORD for His name alone is exalted! You can't read Psalm 148 and miss this point- the world was made for the praise of God- all creatures are called to declare our God's glory!

There is also a parallel between creation and redemption. Both creation and redemption are works of God and God alone! And that is why evolution is such a dangerous teaching. If evolution is true, then all mankind needs is a little bit of time and we can make ourselves better! Man can evolve into a moral, outstanding individual if only given the time! We can be a capable, self-sufficient creature if we just have more time! In other words, if evolution is true, we don't need God! If we have come this far already- evolving from a single cell and now a complex organism, nothing is impossible for us! We don't need God- and thus we are not responsible to God! You see, evolution is just the wolf of rebellion in sheep's clothing! Believing in evolution frees man from responsibility to God! We are truly our own maker- we don't need a divine being! That is why the devil wants you to accept this false doctrine- if you accept evolution, you can make yourself independent of God which is every rebel's desire! But if God is the creator and we are His creatures, we are responsible to Him- and will be held accountable by Him- which is fallen man's greatest fear!

To conclude, we have again seen the greatness and glory of our Triune God who made and sustains all things-the visible and the invisible- for our good. How great our God is! All creation- and particularly those who have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb- should serve and glorify God for all that He has done. In creating, preserving, and in redeeming us from the grave to His praise and glory. That is why we are here! To glorify God! Although it is true that our world is currently messed up- things are falling apart around us- this is not how everything was made! No, to find out what happened to this very good creation you will have to wait until BC art. 14. But as we saw today, our Triune God created all things- visible and invisible- out of nothing for His glory and our good. The doctrine of creation is important not just because honesty demands it, but the first pages of Scripture set the trajectory for the rest of redemption. What does it mean that God will make all things new if He did not first make all things? So when we look at creation let us see its maker- our LORD- and give Him the praise as we use and enjoy the works of His hand!