

# **The Apostles' Creed**

## **Maker of Heaven and Earth**

*Selected Texts*

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# Maker of Heaven and Earth

## Introduction

As we continue our series in *The Apostles' Creed* I would like to examine today what it means to believe in God the Father Almighty as the **maker of heaven and earth**. Please listen as I recite the Apostles' Creed:

*I believe in God the Father Almighty,  
Maker of heaven and earth.*

*I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
and born of the Virgin Mary.  
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended into hell.  
The third day he rose again from the dead.  
He ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand  
of God the Father Almighty.  
From there he will come to judge  
the living and the dead.*

*I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy Catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.*

The following story is told of Sir Isaac Newton who, many years ago, had an exact replica of our solar system made in miniature. At its center was a large golden ball representing the sun, and revolving around it were small spheres attached at the ends of rods of varying lengths. They represented Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars,

and the other planets. These were all geared together by cogs and belts to make them move around the “sun” in perfect harmony.

One day, as Newton was studying the model, a friend who did not believe in the biblical account of creation stopped by for a visit. Marveling at the device and watching as the scientist made the heavenly bodies move on their orbits, the man exclaimed, “My, Newton, what an exquisite thing! Who made it for you?”

Without looking up, Sir Isaac replied, “Nobody.”

“Nobody?” his friend asked.

“That's right! I said nobody! All of these balls and cogs and belts and gears just happened to come together, and wonder of wonders, by chance they began revolving in their set orbits and with perfect timing.”

The unbeliever got the message! It was foolish to suppose that the model merely happened into existence. But it was even more senseless to accept the theory that the earth and the vast universe came into being by chance. How much more logical to believe what the Bible says, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1).

This, of course, echoes what the Apostles’ Creed says when it states that God is the **maker of heaven and earth**.

## Lesson

In our study of the Apostles’ Creed we have now come to the statement that affirms that God the Father is the Creator of all things. The Bible—as well as the Apostles’ Creed—teaches us that God is the **maker of heaven and earth**. Let’s see what the Bible has to teach us about the creation of heaven and earth.

### I. The Views of Creation

First, let’s look at the views of creation.

Every human culture has sought to answer the question of the origin of the world and of man. There are a number of different

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views for the origin of the world and of man. The various views for these origins may be classified under four categories.

### A. *Atheistic View*

First is the atheistic view.

Those who deny any existence of God or any spiritual entity as the source of the world are classified as atheistic.

The best known of the atheistic views is that of evolution. In purely naturalistic evolution matter is eternal. It contains within itself the germ of development. The world is in a constant state of evolving.

The problem with this view is that it asserts the eternity of matter and even more problematic, of course, it denies the existence of God (at least with respect to his activity in creation). It also postulates that the present form of the universe, with all of its complexity, has all come into being through chance.

At a 1981 symposium, Sir Fred Hoyle said: "The chance that higher life forms might have emerged in this way (through evolutionary processes) is comparable with the chance that a tornado sweeping through a junkyard might assemble a Boeing 747 from the materials therein."

As Christians, of course, we do not believe that the atheistic view of creation is in conformity with the teaching of God's Word. The Bible is very clear that God exists, and also that this world was created by God.

### B. *Dualistic View*

Second is the dualistic view.

Dualism comes from Greek philosophy, which posits the eternity of both spiritual and material substances. The spiritual is called God, and he is seen as using the matter to create or form the world.

The problem with this view is that it denies the sole, absolute, eternal, and independent nature of God, by making matter co-eternal and co-existent with him. Moreover, it limits him in the creation, and his control over the universe.

*C. Pantheistic View*

Third is the pantheistic view.

Atheism posits matter and energy. Dualism assumes two eternal substances—spirit and matter. And pantheism seeks to identify everything with God. Both the infinite and the finite are recognized, but they are correlated as different modes of God’s existence. The material world is the manifestation of the spiritual reality of God. God is everything, and everything is God.

The problem with this view is that by identifying God with the universe, creation is ruled out, along with any idea of God’s sovereignty over the world. Ultimately, under this view, there can be no ethic, no religion, no creator, and no creature.

*D. Theistic View*

Fourth is the theistic view.

Theism posits the idea of a Creator God, who creates all else beside himself, without the use of any material.

This is the Biblical view of the origin of the world and of man.

Let us now examine the Biblical view of creation more fully.

## **II. The Concept of Creation**

Second, let’s examine the concept of creation.

The Old Testament uses different words to describe God’s creative activity. They are *bara*, *asah*, and *yatsar*. Each of these words can be—and in fact is—used in one of three different senses in the Bible.

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First, there is the absolute, primary, or immediate sense of creation without the use of any pre-existent material (such as the creation of the world in Genesis 1:1).

Second, there is what may be called secondary creation. This is the forming of something already existing (such as the creation of man from dust in Genesis 2:7).

Third, these terms are even used to refer to that which comes into existence under providential guidance (such as the salvation and righteousness in Isaiah 45:8).

According to the Westminster Confession of Faith (IV:1):

It pleased God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for the manifestation of the glory of his eternal power, wisdom, and goodness, in the beginning, to create, or make of nothing, the world, and all things therein whether visible or invisible, in the space of six days; and all very good.

Clearly what is in view here is creation in the primary sense. God created the world out of nothing that was pre-existing. I'll say more of this in a moment.

We should also note that all three Persons of the Trinity are associated with the creation of heaven and earth. There are some passages which refer the creation to God absolutely, without distinction of person, such as Genesis 1:1: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

In 1 Corinthians 8:6a God the Father is spoken of as creator: "(Y)et for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live."

Creation is also ascribed to God the Son in John 1:1-3: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made."

And creation is also ascribed to God the Holy Spirit in Job 33:4: “The Spirit of God has made me; the breath of the Almighty gives me life.”

Much more could be said about the concept of creation, but let us leave it at that for the moment.

### III. The Time of Creation

Third, the time of creation.

In speaking of the time of creation the Bible uses the ordinary language of daily life. The Bible begins with a simple statement: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1).

The “beginning” to which this statement refers is the beginning of all temporal things, even of time itself. It would not be correct to assume that time was already in existence when God created the world, and that he at some point in that existing time, called “the beginning,” created the heavens and the earth. The world was created *with* time rather than *in* time. Back of the “beginning” mentioned in Genesis 1:1 lies a beginningless eternity.

I should also address the question regarding the age of the universe. As you know, this question still puzzles many minds in the world today. There are several views regarding the age of the universe. Broadly speaking, they can be broken down into two categories.

The first view is the “old earth” view. Scholars holding this view would see the world as millions or even as billions of years old.

The second view is a “young earth” view. Some regard the earth as rather young, perhaps only 20,000 years old. The Institute for Creation Research is probably the best known organization that holds this view, along with many fine Bible scholars.

While it is true that many good and godly Christians hold different views regarding the age of the earth, and therefore of creation itself, it is important to note two points. First, Christians agree

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that the biblical account of creation is giving us answers about *who* created the world. It is vitally important to know and to affirm that it is God the Father Almighty who created the world and all things in it.

But second, it is important to affirm that God created the world and all that is in it in six twenty-four days. It is important because that is the natural sense in reading the text of Scripture. The Scripture states six times that after God created something, “there was evening, and there was morning—the n<sup>th</sup> day” (Genesis 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31). If one were to read Genesis 1 to almost any person who was not familiar with the Biblical account of creation, he or she would affirm that the natural way to understand Genesis 1 is that God created the world in six twenty-four days.

It is also important to affirm that God created the world and all that is in it in six twenty-four hour days for hermeneutical reasons. “Hermeneutics” is the science of interpretation. In other words, when we approach the text of Scripture we need to say what principles will guide us in our understanding of the text. We want to read *out* of the text the meaning of the text itself. We do not want to read *into* the text the meaning we want it to have.

So, think of interpreting the Scriptures with a pair of glasses on. You need two lenses in order to interpret the Scriptures accurately. You need the lens of grammar, which helps you understand the grammar and syntax of the text. And then you need the lens of history, which helps you understand the historical and cultural setting in which that text was written. You need both lenses in order to interpret the Scriptures accurately.

My point, then, is this: approaching the Scriptures with a historico-grammatical hermeneutic will bring you to agree that the earth and all that is in it was created in six twenty-four hour days. And the reason this is important is because when someone says that they do not hold to a six-day creationist position, I am wary about how they are approaching and interpreting the rest of Scripture.



If you go wrong in Genesis 1, I am not confident that you will be accurate in interpreting God's Word elsewhere. And that is why it is so important to approach God's Word correctly.

#### **IV. The Manner of Creation**

Fourth, the manner of creation.

In the strictest sense, the word "to create" means to bring forth something out of nothing or without the use of pre-existent materials. The expression "to create or bring forth out of nothing" is actually not found in Scripture. However, as we noted earlier, one of the senses of the words used for "create" is that of creating or bringing forth out of nothing. The expression simply means that God did not make use of pre-existent materials.

Scriptural warrant for the doctrine that God created the world without pre-existent materials is found in several passages, the clearest of which is Hebrews 11:3: "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" (cf. also Psalm 33:9; 148:5).

And so when we affirm that God is the **maker of heaven and earth**, we affirm that God created the world out of nothing.

#### **V. The Purpose of Creation**

And fifth, the purpose of creation.

The purpose of creation has often been debated. Why did God create the world? Two answers that have been given.

##### *A. The Purpose of Creation is for the Happiness of Man*

First, the purpose of creation is for the happiness of man.

Some of the early Greek and Roman philosophers, the Humanists in the days of the Reformation, and the Rationalists of the

eighteenth century, found the purpose of creation in the happiness of man.

The best form in which this theory is stated is to the effect that God could not make himself the end of creation, because he is sufficient unto himself and has absolutely no need of his creatures. And if he could not make himself the end, then this can be found only in the creature, and ultimately in its supreme happiness.

The problem with this position is that God does not exist for the sake of man, but man for the sake of God. The creature cannot be the final end or purpose of creation. So, the happiness of man is not the purpose of creation.

*B. The Purpose of Creation is for the Glory of God*

And second, the purpose of creation is for the glory of God.

According to Scripture, the true purpose of creation is not found in anything outside of God, but only in God himself. God created the world to manifest his glory. Psalm 19:1 says, “The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.” And Isaiah 43:7 says, “. . . everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.”

The manifestation of the glory of God in nature is not intended as an empty show, a mere exhibition to be admired by the creature. No. The glory of God has as a subordinate purpose the welfare and happiness of the creature. As we tune our hearts to the praises of our Creator, and as we offer expressions of gratitude, love, and adoration, God is not only glorified but we are blessed.

### **Conclusion**

What are some implications of the doctrine that God the Father Almighty is **maker of heaven and earth**?

First, God is sovereign over all. The One who created all things out of nothing, is sovereign over all creation. He is the Crea-

tor, we are the creatures. He is the King, we are the subjects. He is the Ruler, we are the ruled. He is the Lord, we are the servants. We need to recognize that God is not just a little bigger and better than we are; he is infinitely bigger and better than we are. We need to have the same attitude as Job who, when confronted by God himself and was challenged by God to respond to his sovereignty in creation, said, “I know that you can do all things; no plan of yours can be thwarted” (Job 42:2).

And second, God is sufficient for all things. Because God is **maker of heaven and earth**, because he is sovereign over all, he is sufficient for all things. No matter how deep the valley of the shadow of death, God will be there. Our task is to trust God, who alone is sufficient, to help us in every situation.

This, then, is the God who is the **maker of heaven and earth**. Amen.



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