

QUANTOCK MINISTRIES

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*A Bible teaching and preaching ministry
for the Christian community*

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How does the Christian Gospel fit into the great scheme of Creation?

In order to fully understand the importance and necessity of the Christian Gospel we need to look at the big picture of the story of Creation from its beginning to its end. This study is based entirely on the biblical teaching about God, Creation, and the Gospel. It does not include ideas and theories based on science, philosophy, other religions, or human opinions. The Bible starts with eternity before the Creation and finishes with eternity when it will include a completely redeemed and therefore eternal creation.

1. Who or what is God?

In His nature God is Spirit (John 4 v 24) and is therefore outside the physical created universe. The spiritual realm is another dimension altogether, from which the physical universe received its creation, including the origin of life itself. The spiritual dimension, where God is supreme, is eternal, without beginning or ending, meaning that God is the source of all existence, all being, all life. Life is, at root, a spiritual reality, leading to its physical expression. When humans seek to understand how all creation and life itself came into being, they have to go back to this eternal, pre-existing and non-created dimension; coming face-to-face with the reality of God, and the reason why there is something in existence, rather than nothing. Descartes famously started with the premise: "I think, therefore I am"; the Bible teaches us to start with the premise: "God is, therefore I am". Romans 1 v 20 describes God as having eternal power and a divine (supreme, spiritual) nature. He is personal, and not a vague "force".

To appreciate the reality of God and the importance of a relationship with Him, we have to be willing to accept that there is this spiritual dimension above and beyond the physical. From just a physical viewpoint we would never be able to come to a true understanding of God, yet that is the inevitable limit of scientific enquiry and theory, and which can only produce idols and superstition. Isaiah 55 v 6 – 9 is very important on this point, as is Romans 1 v 21 – 23. Unacceptance of God therefore is not usually a question of unbelief ("I don't believe in God") but a question of unwillingness ("I don't want to believe in God") (Hebrews 11 v 6).

God progressively revealed Himself (after Eden) so that humanity became more and more aware of the nature of God. One important milestone was the revelation given to Moses (Exodus 3 v 13 – 15) that God was the supreme "I am who I am" – the source of all being. Progressive revelation reached a climax with the coming of Jesus (John 1 v 14), and He profoundly taught and demonstrated the reality and divine nature of God. His life and teaching, together with the further understanding given to the apostles (the New Testament), show so clearly that God is in fact three distinct persons existing in the closest possible unity – the Trinity. God the Father is the divine figurehead, God the Son is the reason and cause of Creation, God the Holy Spirit embodies the divine power to implement and sustain Creation in all its facets; in the simplest of terms - an architect, an heir, and a builder. Being corporate, God can originate and embody such life-enhancing attributes as love, faithfulness, grace, joy, etc., which would be impossible if He were a single entity. Thus all three are totally and eternally one in their deity, equality, and purpose.

2. God's relationship with His creation in general

The act of physical creation, described as "the beginning", brought into being time, space, matter, and energy (e.g. Genesis 1 v 1, Psalm 102 v 25 - 27, John 1 v 3 – 4, Colossians 1 v 16, etc).

Time. God, being eternal, is beyond the constraints of time. When considering the issues of creation, it is God who is sovereign, not time. God does not need time to achieve His purposes (although He may well use time in some of His dealings with the physical creation), which is where science is so limited in its explanations. As physical beings, we proceed through time; God does not "proceed" through eternity. Hebrews 13 v 8 refers to Jesus being the same yesterday, today and for ever, but that doesn't just mean He is always the same in intent (He is), but that He (God) exists completely all at the same time – a never-ending "now". Jesus often demonstrated His divine ability to act without the constraints of time, supremely in the immediate raising of the decomposing Lazarus with a simple command (John 12 v 43 – 44).

Space. In our physical dimension the nearest we can get to appreciate the wonder of eternity is in our contemplation of the vastness of the universe. Of all generations, we are living in an age where the sheer immensity of the created universe is being progressively discovered to an astounding degree. Psalm 19 v 1 shows that the prime purpose of the glory of space is to declare the glory of God, and yet it is utterly incredible that humans dogmatically assert it all came about by chance – Romans 1 v 18 - 23. Space and its contents did not come about with a big bang, but a big Word (Hebrews 11 v 3). But today we are also increasingly aware of another vastness in created space –space at the atomic level. I find the vastness of this inner space even more mind-boggling than outer space, and that we appear to be somewhere in the middle between both realms of space.

Matter. As we put together the whole creation teaching of the Bible, it would seem that having created time and space, the Holy Spirit then started the work of creating and assembling matter (e.g. Genesis 1 v 1 – 2). He had acted rather like a cook, preparing and assembling the ingredients before starting the process of putting them together. Once again, being God, the Holy Spirit did not need time for the formation of multiple types of matter; His Word was sufficient. It reminds us of the Lord Jesus instantly creating enough to feed the five thousand, etc.

Energy. The existence of the energy needed to create and sustain all the processes of creation is completely incomprehensible. Without an external power coming into the physical creation, the existence of energy in the universe is hard to understand. We could ask whether, without this external power source, the so-called initial “big bang” wouldn’t have just flickered out like a dead fire, leaving the universe full of infinitely cold and dead embers. However, the application of the power of God the Holy Spirit was structured in such a very mathematically precise and unalterable way that energy continues to provide a living universe. Jeremiah 33 v 25 refers to the establishment of the fixed laws of heaven and earth. We now know these as the more than fifty unchangeable constants that keep the entire universe energised and functioning in the most amazing way. Without the external supervision of God these wouldn’t be constants; they would instead be subject to the immense pressures within the universe, which would lead to chaos and collapses of the most spectacular nature.

3. God’s relationship with planet Earth and humanity in particular

The Bible indicates that this planet is the centre of God’s eternal creation purposes, and that human beings have been created in the image of God. This is a description of the fact that every human has an immortal spirit, capable of a relationship with God Himself (Ecclesiastes 3 v 11), which is the reason for creation in the first place. That means each of us has an unbreakable and intrinsic link with the eternal dimension – an awesome position to be in (Psalm 8). This is the basis of the sanctity of the life of every individual human being, including those conceived but unborn (Psalm 139 v 13 – 16).

That then inevitably raises the question as to why God allows such an evil state of affairs on Earth. The heart of the answer is seen in Ephesians 3 v 14 – 15: “I kneel before the Father, from whom His whole family in heaven and earth derives its name.” The two words that are at the very core of this situation is FATHER and FAMILY. God’s declared relationship with us is not one of domination and control; He is not an autocratic dictator. True, He has established the moral boundaries of human life, but fatherhood is the characteristic He values in regard to us. Like any true father, He accepts that we have freedom to exercise our wills and in this respect He has made Himself as vulnerable as any earthly parent. We are not puppets or robots, designed solely to do as He decrees. He does not want us to accept and love Him because we are programmed to do nothing else, but because we want to. As with any human father, once the “child” has achieved maturity God shows His love and concern in so many ways but in His foreknowledge accepts our personal freedom and responsibility. Jesus showed this while on earth; He indicated His disappointment many times, weeping over people’s rejection of who He is and all He stands for. God loves family life and wants us to be part of His family, which is why He asks those who do love Him to be a family together – brothers and sisters in Christ.

4. God’s provision for redemption

Above all else Father God has provided for any human to come back to a relationship with Him – a situation we call redemption. During history there have been several different eras of God’s provision of redemption, but just over two thousand years ago, in the “fulness of time”, God the Son came to this planet and added the physical nature of humanity to His deity. Then, in that capacity He offered a completely free method for any individual throughout the whole world to come to a complete and willing relationship with God by just accepting Jesus Himself as their Saviour and Lord. He offers peace with God (Romans 5 v 1) by offering Himself as a substitute in our place, bearing the punishment we deserve. John 3 v 16 shows that this is the way that is acceptable to our heavenly Father. Our faith in the sacrifice of Jesus, and our recognition of our personal waywardness (repentance from sin), opens the way for God’s forgiveness and the guarantee of our place with Him in Heaven in the eternity that is the destiny of our immortal spirits.

5. Where will all this lead?

A new life here. Like any wayward child, once we’ve come back to our father, apologised, and the relationship has been fully restored, we turn over a new leaf and enjoy a completely different way of life (2 Corinthians 5 v 17). The Holy Spirit takes up residence in our lives, giving us a new life altogether, and starting the preparation for our future in eternity with God.

A messianic future here on Earth. There is to be an amazing millennial future for this planet when Jesus returns, accompanied by all redeemed humans as His bride. He will bring in a new world order that will be free of satanic influence, and when there will be no war, no abuse, no corruption, no climatic upheavals, a pure environment, etc. We long for this every time we pray the Lord’s Prayer – “Thy Kingdom Come”.

An eternal future with God. After that final glorious era on Earth, the whole Creation will be wonderfully renewed and all godlessness removed (Revelation 21 v 1 & 5, where “new” is *kainos* – renewed, or redeemed). We will enjoy all the reality of the eternal existence although, like Jesus, we will have a physical dimension as well (Philippians 3 v 21). That will be our true ultimate destiny and time will be no more; we will be living in the eternal “now”.

An eternal future without God. Sadly, those who have rejected God’s wonderful gift of redemption will still have an eternal destiny, but in a place far removed from God’s presence. Because this is inevitable, the Christian Gospel has an urgency – “Now is the accepted time. Now is the day of salvation” (2 Corinthians 6 v 2 AV). Eternal death is not annihilation; it is eternity away from the presence of God and all the blessings of His fatherhood.