

PASTORAL MINISTRY AND CREATION DOCTRINE

William D. Barrick
Th.D., Grace Theological Seminary
Professor of Old Testament and Hebrew (Emeritus)
The Master's Seminary

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Foundational truths from biblical creation doctrine contribute to a variety of pastoral ministry applications. Creation doctrine (or, Bible-based creationism) comprises an element of biblical theology resulting from exegesis of the biblical text. Creation doctrine relates even to the title of “pastor/shepherd” since Scripture identifies the Chief Shepherd as Creator in a context dealing with life, death, and Scripture. Creation doctrine introduces and influences the content of written revelation dealing with the person and work of Christ. Creation doctrine is also related to the biblical concept of community. Creation doctrine aids biblical counseling with truths for guiding counselees toward commitment, providing comfort, and navigating one’s creatureliness (especially in issues of gender, sexuality, and marriage). Finally, creation doctrine bears directly on the biblical doctrines of future consummation and celestial residency.

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Introduction

Biblical theology as a methodology commences with exegesis of the biblical text in its historical context. “Biblical theology seeks to determine what the biblical writers said concerning a theological issue...”¹ Pastoral ministry finds its source in biblical theology by way of systematic theology which examines doctrinal discussions in the light of contemporary issues and views. Pastors then take the elements of systematic theology to formulate their practical theology—the application of biblical truth to congregants and counselees facing a variety of issues and situations as they seek to live out God’s will in their lives.²

¹ Paul Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology* (Chicago: Moody, 1989), 23.

² See Enns’ chart of biblical theology’s relationships to other disciplines; Enns, *Handbook of Theology*, 22.

Scripture's opening words confront readers with the doctrines of God and creation: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen 1:1).³ God reveals what human beings cannot know by any other means. When creation took place there were no human witnesses. No matter how anyone might think God accomplished creation, every individual's concept of origins begins with faith rather than direct observation. The object of faith determines one's view on origins. If the object of faith is God Himself, then what He has revealed in the Scriptures provides the information required to develop creation doctrine. If the object of faith is human experience and investigative or philosophical knowledge, creation doctrine is subject to human nature and its limitations.

Following Adam's disobedience, the complexity of divine truth became difficult for fallen humans to comprehend.⁴ Human beings forget, neglect, disobey, or skew what God does reveal to them. In fact, fallen humanity constantly seeks to eliminate God from their knowledge. In Romans 1:21–25 the Apostle Paul puts it this way:

For even though they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the likeness of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures. Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

The human condition necessitates divine revelation. Scripture points fallen mankind to the path for restoration to fellowship with God. Natural revelation (the testimony of conscience and creation) lacks any redemptive message. Without special revelation mankind possesses no authoritative or dependable direction from their Creator. The Bible is that God-given special revelation.

A summary of biblical theology in Genesis 1–3 provides a simple description of creation doctrine (or, Bible-based creationism):

(1) God revealed Himself as omnipotent and sovereign in the creation of the universe and world. (2) God is holy, demanding obedience for fellowship with Himself. (3) God is a God of grace, as manifest through the promise of a Savior. (4) Man is the apex of God's creation, created in the image and likeness of God for fellowship with God and for rule over God's creation. (5) Man is a responsible creature, answerable to a holy God. Man is constituted a sinner through the sin of Adam. (6) God initiates His redemptive program by promising a Savior to Adam and Eve. The promise anticipates Messiah's triumph over Satan, providing the basis for the restored kingdom.⁵

³ Scripture quotes are from the *Legacy Standard Bible* (Irvine, CA: Three Sixteen, 2022).

⁴ For a masterful exegetical study of this biblical matter, see George J. Zemek, *Tethered to the Text: An Exegetical Approach to Apologetics* (Jupiter, FL: Expositors, 2024), 39–118.

⁵ Enns, *Handbook of Theology*, 42, thus summarizes the "theology of the Edenic Era."

Theocentricity stands out in this summary. God is the center and source of all creation doctrine. We can expect that the rest of Scripture will bear this out. Indeed, again and again the writers of Scripture refer back to creation doctrine to support their view of God, the world, the human situation, and the future. Passages like Psalm 33:6–9, Isaiah 45:6–18, John 1:1–5, Colossians 1:15–17, and Hebrews 11:1–3 demonstrate that “the doctrine of creation is fundamental to Christian theology.”⁶

The belief that God has created and is sustaining the order of the world in all its complexities, is not a peripheral theme of biblical theology but is plainly the fundamental theme. What Israel experienced in her history and what the early Christian community experienced in relation to Jesus is understood and interpreted in terms of this one basic theme.⁷

Therefore, creation doctrine is fundamental to pastoral ministry. However, it too often falls between the cracks in many evangelical churches. Van Dam identifies the cause: “Fueling much of the downplaying or denial of the literal historicity of the events reported in Genesis 1 and 2 is the enormous prestige enjoyed by science and its championing the theory of evolution as the most attractive explanation of how this present world and its inhabitants came to be.”⁸

Sound biblical theology commences with commitment to biblical inerrancy. Unfortunately, many pastors hold to a very weak view of the integrity and historical accuracy of the Bible. According to MacArthur, “a discernable trend exists in contemporary evangelicalism *away* from biblical preaching and *toward* a pragmatic, topical, and experience-centered approach in the pulpit.”⁹ Biblical inerrancy empowers expository preaching. When we accept the apostle Paul’s declaration that “all Scripture is God-breathed,” we must also commit ourselves to every part of Scripture (including Gen 1–11) as “profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be equipped, having been thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Tim 3:16–17).¹⁰

Secular science and its evolutionary theory oppose Bible-based creationism. Contemporary culture deifies the evolutionary process. In other words, many people believe that evolution controls and determines what happens rather than an omniscient, omnipotent, sovereign, free, and transcendent God. If evolution presents the true history of the universe and everything in it, every major biblical doctrine proves false—even the gospel message itself. If evolution is true,

⁶ Andrew S. Kulikovsky, *Creation, Fall, Restoration: A Biblical Theology of Creation* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2009), 15.

⁷ H. H. Schmid, “Creation, Righteousness and Salvation: ‘Creation Theology’ as the Broad Horizon of Biblical Theology,” in *Creation in the Old Testament*, ed. B. W. Anderson (London: SPCK, 1979), 111.

⁸ Cornelis Van Dam, *In the Beginning: Listening to Genesis 1 and 2* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2021), 2.

⁹ John F. MacArthur, Jr., “The Mandate of Biblical Inerrancy: Expository Preaching,” in *The Master’s Perspective on Pastoral Ministry*, eds. Richard L. Mayhue and Robert L. Thomas, The Master’s Perspective Series 3 (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2002), 143 (emphasis original).

¹⁰ John MacArthur makes this point in “The Mandate and the Motivations: Inerrancy and Expository Preaching,” in *The Inerrant Word: Biblical, Historical, Theological, and Pastoral Perspectives*, ed. John MacArthur (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 335.

(1) Death cannot be the result of sin or penalty for sin if millions of years of death occurred *before* Adam existed or sinned. (2) In the standard evolutionary view, there is no Adam—people today are allegedly descended from a group of individuals that branched off from the apes. (3) Apart from a literal Genesis, there is no guarantee that Jesus is descended from Adam and thus eligible to pay our debt.¹¹

The theory of evolution impacts pastoral ministry by insisting that many of the sins identified in Scripture arise out of one’s environment, natural history, or guilt imposed by practitioners of Christianity (e.g., homosexuality, disobedience, theft, murder).

The very title “pastor” (ποιμήν, *poimēn*, Eph 4:11; cp. Acts 20:28 and 1 Pet 5:2) means “shepherd.”¹² Interestingly, Solomon attributes the title of “Shepherd” to God in Ecclesiastes 12:11 within a context saturated with creation doctrine. First, Solomon tells his readers to “Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth” (v. 1). Second, the mention of “the sun and the light, the moon and the stars” (v. 2) brings the Genesis creation account to mind.

The scenario of all heavenly luminaries and light itself being extinguished is a poetic description of the undoing of creation: *when not yet will have darkened the sun and the light and the moon and the stars* describes an unstoppable future period of complete darkness in which acts of God’s creative work will have been undone, the products of God’s creative activity on days one and four of creation (Gen 1:3–5, 14–19). Every important word in Ecclesiastes 12:2a appears in the narrative about these two days of creation.¹³

Third, Solomon alludes to God’s creation of Adam from dust and Adam’s return to dust when he dies as a consequence of his disobedience: “then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it” (v. 7; cf. Gen 2:7 and 3:19). Fourth, “whether it is good or evil” (וְאִם-טוֹב וְאִם-רָע, *’im-tôb wə’im-rā’*, v. 14) echoes the “the tree of the knowledge of good and evil” (Gen 2:9, וְעֵץ הַדַּעַת טוֹב וְרָע, *wə’ēṣ hadda’at tôb wā rā’*) and reminds readers of the fact that God judged Adam because he had eaten the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil contrary to His explicit command (Gen 2:16–17; 3:11, 17–19). Thus, in a context dealing with life, death, and even Scripture itself, God’s titles as Creator and Shepherd are juxtaposed. Pastors (shepherds of the flocks over which God has placed them) must reflect their “Chief Shepherd” (1 Pet 5:1–4), Christ Himself (cf. John 10:11–16), who is also the Creator and ultimate author of Scripture.

Without giving full consideration to the doctrine of creation and its role in Christian life and faith, pastors severely limit their toolkit for proclaiming the gospel

¹¹ Jason Lisle, *Understanding Genesis: How to Analyze, Interpret, and Defend Scripture* (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2015), 314.

¹² W. F. Arndt, F. W. Gingrich, and F. W. Danker, eds., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed., rev. and ed. Frederick William Danker (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 843.

¹³ Knut Martin Heim, *Ecclesiastes: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries 18, ed. David G. Firth (London: InterVarsity, 2019), 193.

and ministering to needy and hurting believers. Creation doctrine relates directly to most topics addressed in pastoral ministry. The remainder of this study will address the topics of Christ, community, counseling (with special attention to commitment, comfort, and creatureliness), consummation, and celestial residence—all occurring in Scripture together with references to creation doctrine.

Creation Doctrine and Christ

Through the prophet Isaiah God reveals the relationship He bore to the Messiah, His Servant (Isa 42:1–9).

Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold;
My chosen one *in whom* My soul is well-pleased.
I have put My Spirit upon Him;
He will bring forth justice to the nations.
He will not cry out or raise *His voice*,
Nor make His voice heard in the street.
A crushed reed He will not break
And a faintly burning wick He will not extinguish;
He will bring forth justice in truth.
He will not be faint or crushed
Until He has established justice in the earth;
And the coastlands will wait expectantly for His law.
Thus says the God, Yahweh,
Who created the heavens and stretched them out,
Who spread out the earth and its offspring,
Who gives breath to the people on it
And spirit to those who walk in it,
“I am Yahweh, I have called You in righteousness;
I will also take hold of You by the hand and guard You,
And I will give You as a covenant to the people,
As a light to the nations,
To open blind eyes,
To bring out prisoners from the dungeon
And those who inhabit darkness from the prison.
I am Yahweh, that is My name;
I will not give My glory to another,
Nor My praise to graven images.
Behold, the former things have come to pass;
Now I declare new things;
Before they spring forth I cause you to hear *them*.”

Yahweh “created the heavens and stretched them out, ... spread out the earth and its offspring, ... gives breath to the people on it, and spirit to those who walk in it” (v. 5). The tie to creation doctrine cannot be ignored. The very same God who created the heavens, the earth, and human beings chose and upholds His Servant. The Creator is pleased with His Servant and put His Spirit upon Him (v. 1). He commissioned His

Servant, guarded Him, gave Him as a covenant to His people, and as a light to the nations (v. 6) “to open blind eyes, to bring out prisoners from the dungeon, and those who inhabit darkness from the prison” (v. 7). This textual unit demonstrates that

God’s creative power in salvation is tied to His power in creation. The worship of God is tied to Him as the Creator. According to the book of Revelation, the God to be worshiped is the one who made the heavens and the earth, and all that is in them. The pattern for worship is God as Creator, and God as the new Creator of those who put their trust in Him.¹⁴

In the New Testament four witnesses appeal to Isaiah’s declaration of Messiah’s commission to bring salvation to the Jews and Gentiles alike: Simeon (Luke 2:32), Jesus (Luke 4:16–21 citing the equivalent prophecy from Isa 61:1–2), and Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13:47). Jesus Christ Himself announced that He fulfills Isaiah’s prophecies. He provides salvation because He is fully God and participated in creation at the very beginning of all things (Col 1:16–20):

For in Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together...

Therefore,

... For in Him all the fullness of *God* was pleased to dwell, and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross—through Him—whether things on earth or things in heaven.

The Son of God Himself entered the world in human flesh—true humanity united with true deity. God created Jesus’ humanity. Jesus, therefore, represents unfallen creation as the second Adam (cf. Rom 5:14–21; 1 Cor 15:45). Just as the original creation was perfect and sinless, the humanity of Jesus is also perfect and sinless. In His perfection Jesus Christ became the author of salvation. This is the message of Hebrews 2:9–15,

But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels—Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone. For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings. For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of One; for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brothers, ... Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that

¹⁴ John MacArthur, “Why Every Self-Respecting Calvinist Must Be a Six-Day Creationist,” in *The Shepherd as Theologian*, ed. John MacArthur (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2017), 68.

is, the devil, and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.

Creation doctrine cannot be separated from biblical Christology or soteriology. All that Christ is and accomplishes relates back to creation doctrine. Pastors seeking to teach the Word of God and to apply it to the lives of their congregants cannot do so biblically without giving careful attention to creation doctrine. Pastoral ministry thrives on creation doctrine because it is enmeshed with the doctrine of Christ. Individual salvation and sanctification depend upon the truths derived from the early chapters of Genesis which form the foundation for the rest of Scripture.¹⁵ The pastor's ministerial tool kit without creation doctrine may be justifiably compared to a surgeon's tool kit without medicine, scalpel, and syringe.

To fully understand the deity of Christ, a person must believe God (indeed, the Son of God Himself) created all things exactly as recorded in Genesis 1–2. Apart from the deity of Christ there can be no incarnation at the miraculous conception of Jesus. If Jesus Christ is not the almighty, sovereign Creator of all things, He cannot be the Savior of anyone. More than this, if Genesis 1–2 cannot be taken as a fully accurate record of the six days of creation, it would be inconsistent and illogical to take the Gospels as a fully accurate record of the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Turning Genesis 1–11 into myth turns the Gospels into myth. The textual connection stands out quite clearly in the opening words of the New Testament: “The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham” (Matt 1:1). The only other place in the Bible the phraseology “the book of the genealogy of” occurs is Genesis 5:1, “This is the book of the generations [or, genealogy] of Adam.” The very first verse of the New Testament presents Jesus as the second Adam. Pastoral ministry has no foundation in the person and work of Jesus Christ if either of these Scripture units falls into the realm of myth rather than historical narrative (cf. Rom 5:14–21).

Jesus compared His teachings to what Moses had written (like the creation account in Gen 1–2). He said, “For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?” (John 5:46–47). Jesus issues this challenge to everyone. Believers cannot claim to believe what Jesus says if they reject what Moses wrote. In addition to Genesis 1–2, Moses wrote of creation in Psalm 90:1–3,

Lord, You have been our dwelling place from generation to generation.
Before the mountains were born
Or You brought forth the earth and the world,
Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.
You turn man back into dust
And say, “Return, O sons of men.”

¹⁵ Later discussion of the topics under “Creation and Counseling” will provide evidence of the relationship of creation doctrine to sanctification. See, also, Enns' points (2) and (5) in his summary of creation doctrine in the “Introduction” above.

The initial verses of this psalm allude to Genesis 1–3. Creation doctrine permeates its words. It is noteworthy that such references to the creation event focus heavily upon the doctrine concerning God Himself. Grogan makes this very point: “the psalmists often refer to Yahweh as creator, either explicitly or by implication. They certainly believed him to be creator of all. How could he be any less than this if he was the only God who existed? If sole deity does not imply creation of the whole cosmos, what can it mean?”¹⁶

In Acts 17:24–31 the apostle Paul presents the gospel concerning Christ by opening his discourse with creation doctrine. He begins by proclaiming “‘the one God’ (ὁ θεός) who created the universe and who is thus the ‘Lord’ (κύριος) of the universe.”¹⁷

The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all *people* life and breath and all things; and He made from one *man* every nation of mankind to inhabit all the face of the earth, having determined *their* appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation,¹⁸ that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we also are His offspring.’ Being then the offspring of God, we ought not to suppose that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the craft and thought of man. Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now commanding men that everyone everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He determined, having furnished proof to all by raising Him from the dead.

Paul confronts and contradicts the viewpoint of his pagan hearers. The Creator is exclusively God. There is no other. Additionally, “he is not served by human effort; he knows no special people (like the Jews or the Greeks) since all were made by God; God purposes to draw humanity to himself.”¹⁹ Ultimately the divine purpose of the original creation is the worship of the Creator, the one true God.²⁰ Then the apostle

¹⁶ Geoffrey W. Grogan, *Psalms*, Two Horizons Old Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 246.

¹⁷ Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Acts*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, ed. Clinton E. Arnold (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 731.

¹⁸ Schnabel, *Acts*, 735, says, “the ‘boundaries of their lands’ are the political boundaries between the places where people live—whether cities, regions, provinces, or continents.” Schnabel not only relates Paul’s teaching to Gen 10, but also to Deut 32:8: “‘When the Most High gave the nations their inheritance, when he divided all mankind, he set up boundaries for the peoples according to the number of the sons of Israel.’ ... the Greek term (κατοικία) denotes the place(s) where people live; ... ὁρθοεσία is used in terms of political boundaries ...” (735n1135). Paul’s sources go back to Moses (cf. discussion of John 5:46–47 above).

¹⁹ Kenneth O. Gangel, *Acts*, Holman New Testament Commentary 5, ed. Max Anders (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1998), 289.

²⁰ Gangel, *Acts*, 290. See also Schnabel, *Acts*, 731, “Since the one God created everything without exception, he ‘is’ (ὕπαρχων) the ‘Lord’ (κύριος) of the entire cosmos, of heaven and earth, of the world and everything in it.”

calls for his hearers to repent (v. 30) and to acknowledge that the only righteous judge of all humankind is the “Man whom He determined, having furnished proof to all by raising Him from the dead” (v. 31). Thus, creation doctrine leads to Christ and His resurrection, and the gospel of salvation.²¹

Creation Doctrine and Community

When Jonah disobeyed God and attempted to flee to Tarshish to avoid going to Nineveh, God got his attention by means of a great storm on the sea (Jonah 1:1–4). The ship’s sailors confronted Jonah and asked him five questions to obtain some explanation for their peril. Jonah responded, “I am a Hebrew, and I fear Yahweh, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land” (v. 9). Jonah “asserts that Yahweh is the true God of heaven who has control over all creation.”²² His declaration of faith in the Creator marked him as a member of the believing Hebrew community. The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews indicates that all members of the community of faith hold to the same creation doctrine (Heb 11:1–3):

Now faith is the assurance of *things* hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the men of old gained approval. By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.

In the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, the Israelite elders declared their corporate commitment to Yahweh by referring first to His act of creation (Neh 9:6), then His choice of Abram (vv. 7–8), and then the miraculous deliverance of His people out of Egypt (vv. 9–10). As Breneman observes, “The doctrine of creation is important because it emphasizes God’s sovereignty over all.”²³ The sovereign Creator is eminently trustworthy and worthy of all praise. Context reveals that this prayerful hymn of praise originated from the reading of the law in Nehemiah 8.

The prayer ... shows the influence on the people of the Scripture reading of the previous three weeks, since the Old Testament begins with a creation account. In fact, the entire prayer follows an outline based on the content of the early books of the Old Testament.²⁴

²¹ David E. Garland, *Acts*, Teach the Text Commentary Series, ed. Mark L. Strauss and John H. Walton (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2017), 177, identifies the “Big Idea” of Paul’s address to the Areopagus council as follows: “As creator, God places a claim on all people. God’s purpose for humankind is for all to be in a worshipful relation with their creator, and he will hold all accountable for their willful ignorance and rejection.”

²² JoAnna M. Hoyt, *Amos, Jonah, & Micah*, Evangelical Exegetical Commentary, ed. H. Wayne House and William D. Barrick (Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2018), 438. Hoyt adds, “Given the satirical tone that is used throughout the book, including the numerous elements of irony, it is likely that Jonah proclaims this message with gusto because, as wrong as he is in his actions, his theology is solid. All his actions are lessons in contradictions” (439).

²³ Mervin Breneman, *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*, New American Commentary 10, ed. E. Ray Clendenen and Kenneth A. Mathews (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1993), 236.

²⁴ James Montgomery Boice, *Nehemiah: An Expositional Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 101.

Here, then, is an example for pastoral ministry today. Believers respond to the reading and exposition of Scripture. As in the time of Nehemiah, public reading of the creation account in Genesis 1–2 can be the catalyst for corporate prayer and praise.

Creation Doctrine and Counseling

Biblical counseling must be Christ-centered and Bible-based. Wayne Mack explains the latter in the following way:

Christian counseling will be *conscientiously and comprehensively Bible-based*, deriving from the Bible its understanding of who man is, the nature of his main problems, why he has these problems, and how to resolve them. For counseling to be worthy of the name of Christ, the counselor must be conscientiously and comprehensively committed to the *sufficiency of Scripture* for understanding and resolving all of the nonphysical personal and interpersonal, sin-related difficulties of man.²⁵

When it comes to making counseling Bible-based, pastors and counselors must recognize “there is in the Bible no redemption, no social and personal life, apart from the creation.”²⁶ In other words, all biblical doctrine begins with the Bible’s teaching about creation and the Creator.

Romans 1:25 declares, “For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.” As White explains, “To deny the Creator-creation relationship, which is exactly what Paul presents here, requires that one know what the relationship is before denying it.”²⁷ The apostle goes on to give examples of behavior (vv. 26–31) resulting from minds rejecting God’s truth. The antidote for such twisted behavior in rebellion against one’s Creator and His creation consists of a return to that truth as revealed in biblical creation doctrine.

Commitment

The first “by faith” the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews specified presents fellow believers as the opening example in the roll call of the faith: “By faith we” (Heb 11:3). What is the act of faith? “We understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.” The first example involves adherence to the doctrine of creation. No one but God and His angels were present at the creation of the universe and it “can’t be verified or reproduced in laboratories.”²⁸ Believing what no human saw or experienced provides the ultimate model of faith. We only learn about and understand

²⁵ Wayne A. Mack, “The Sufficiency of Scripture in Counseling,” in *The Master’s Perspective on Pastoral Ministry*, eds. Richard L. Mayhue and Robert L. Thomas, The Master’s Perspective Series 3 (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2002), 186 (emphasis original).

²⁶ Colin E. Gunton, *Christ and Creation* (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 1992), 33.

²⁷ James R. White, *The God Who Justifies* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 2001), 162.

²⁸ Thomas R. Schreiner, *Hebrews*, Evangelical Biblical Theology Commentary, ed. T. Desmond Alexander and Andreas J. Köstenberger (Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2021), 343.

the miracle of original creation from what God has revealed to us in His written Word. Scripture teaches that God simply spoke and what He intended came immediately into existence (cp. Pss 33:6 and 148:5).

Faith requires believers to commit themselves to their Creator. The apostle Peter writes, “Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God must entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing good” (1 Pet 4:19). As the only use of κτίστης (*ktistēs*, “Creator”) in the New Testament, “this is an affirmation of the unmatched power and gracious initiative of God, expressed in his creative work.”²⁹ Again, creation doctrine forms the foundation for faithful living for an even more faithful Creator—even in times of extreme suffering. Lack of commitment to creation doctrine as presented in the Scriptures will lead to a lack of commitment to the rest of Scripture. God has chosen to sanctify the believer by the washing of the Word of God (Eph 5:26–27). Eliminating creation doctrine as a major theme of Scripture weakens the sanctifying power of the Word. The writer of Hebrews associates personal commitment to God and to the household of God (the assembly of believers) to the sanctifying work of this spiritual washing (Heb 10:22–25):

Let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging *one another*, and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

Comfort

Now that we have mentioned suffering as something believers might experience (1 Pet 4:19 above), we find that creation doctrine provides the soothing salve of comfort. King David penned Psalm 139 as a praise-filled lament. Consider what David says in verses 13–18,

For You formed my inward parts;
You wove me in my mother's womb.
I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
Wonderful are Your works,
And my soul knows it very well.
My frame was not hidden from You,
When I was made in secret,
And intricately woven in the depths of the earth;
Your eyes have seen my unshaped substance;
And in Your book all of them were written
The days that were formed *for me*,
When as yet there was not one of them.
How precious are Your thoughts to me, O God!

²⁹ Joel B. Green, *1 Peter*, Two Horizons New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 161.

How vast is the sum of them!
 If I should count them, they would outnumber the sand.
 When I awake, I am still with You.

David testifies to God’s knowledge of both his outer life (v. 2a) and his inner life (v. 2b). He marvels at his Creator’s wisdom in how He made him (v. 14). Through the roughest times of life with all the trials and troubles one might face, God never ceases to think about the one who worships Him (vv. 17–18).

The psalm takes the literary form of a lament. That does not thereby eliminate positive elements. Laments often end with the psalmist expressing trust and praise. Vroegop defines lament as “a prayer in pain that leads to trust.”³⁰ He describes lament as a “step of faith to reach out to God. Lament invites us to turn our gaze from the rubble of life to the Redeemer of every hurt. It calls us to turn toward promise while still in pain.”³¹ The resulting praise in Psalm 139 arises out of the character and actions of the Creator Himself, as Bullock explains:

Moreover, when we find ourselves in a place that seems to be devoid of God’s presence, we discover, perhaps to our surprise, that God is *there* (139:7–12), and not only *there* but even guiding us by his right hand. When we find ourselves in the darkest places of our lives, when human logic would insist that we can’t see God’s way and God can’t see us, we discover that darkness is no obstacle for God’s providential care—darkness is like light to him. God’s pursuit is more one of love than of judgment.³²

Some years ago we read Psalm 139:13–17 before our daughter entered surgery for breast cancer. The psalm enabled us to face the fear of cancer, surgery, and the potential outcomes. The Creator-God of all comfort gave comfort as He promises (2 Cor 1:3–5):

Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For just as the sufferings of Christ abound to us, so also our comfort abounds through Christ.

Our Creator never ignores His creation either corporately or individually. He truly cares.³³ Isaiah affirms this truth in connection with his assertion that Yahweh, the

³⁰ Mark Vroegop, *Dark Clouds, Deep Mercy: Discovering the Grace of Lament* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2019), 28. Pastors and counselors might find this insightful volume quite beneficial for initiating a Bible study of lament with counselees experiencing pain, grief, and suffering.

³¹ Vroegop, *Dark Clouds, Deep Mercy*, 29.

³² C. Hassell Bullock, *Psalms 73–150*, Teach the Text Commentary Series 2, ed. Mark L. Strauss and John H. Walton (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2017), 509 (emphasis original).

³³ Tremper Longman III, *Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries 16, ed. David G. Firth and Tremper Longman III (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2014), 451–52, disagrees with taking this psalm so positively: “It is often read as a calm reflection on

Creator, never tires of providing new power and strength to the tired and weary (Isa 40:28–31):

Do you not know? Have you not heard?
The Everlasting God, Yahweh, the Creator of the ends of the earth,
Does not become weary or tired.
His understanding is unsearchable.
He gives power to the weary,
And to *him who* lacks vigor He increases might.
Though youths grow weary and tired,
And choice young men stumble badly,
Yet those who hope in Yahweh
Will gain new power;
They will mount up *with* wings like eagles;
They will run and not get tired;
They will walk and not become weary.

Isaiah begins with creation doctrine (v. 28) in order to highlight the Creator's power and wisdom. Because God is Creator with these specific divine attributes, He can offer hope to the afflicted and weary.

The writers of Scripture consistently turn to creation doctrine for comfort arising out of faith in our Creator. As Peter concludes his first epistle, he offers believers this Spirit-led instruction: "Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, CASTING ALL YOUR ANXIETY ON HIM, because He cares for you" (1 Pet 5:7). Who more fitting to give our cares and sufferings to than the sovereign Creator of the universe?

Creatureliness

As the creation of God, human beings are His creatures. Our creatureliness includes being created in our Creator's image (Gen 1:26–27). No one can come to terms with the reality of his or her existence, nature, or condition without understanding this creation truth. Today one of the key issues in human society involves human gender and sexuality. Only in the Scriptures can we find the objective truth regarding this particular issue. Burk, Closson, and Smothers provide an excellent manual dealing with gender, sexuality, and marriage that does just that—returning to God's truth beginning with creation itself.³⁴

God's omniscience, omnipresence and omnipotence and how these awesome divine qualities elicit wonder and comfort from the composer. Such a reading simplifies the psalm and ignores the final stanza (vv. 19–24), which is an intense statement of hatred towards the psalmist's dangerous enemies and includes an appeal to God to realize that the psalmist is innocent. Moreover, the first three stanzas (vv. 1–6, 7–12, 13–18) themselves express ambivalence about God's pervasive knowledge, presence and power. In the light of its final stanza, the psalm is best considered a lament."

³⁴ Denny Burk, David Closson, and Colin Smothers, *Male & Female He Created Them: A Study on Gender, Sexuality & Marriage* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2023). This book might be a valuable study guide for marital counseling and instructing singles in how to live a life of purity. On the topic of homosexuality see also the articles by Grisanti, Murphy, Klassen, and Riccardi in *The Master's Seminary Journal* 28, no. 2 (Fall 2017).

Jesus directs the Pharisees' attention to the biblical record of creation in Genesis 1–2 when answering their question about divorce (Matt 19:4–9).³⁵

And He answered and said, “Have you not read that He who created *them* from the beginning MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE, and said, ‘FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH’? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate.”

By quoting from Genesis 1:27 and 2:24 Jesus verifies that creation doctrine applies immediately and efficaciously to human sexuality and marriage. Since Jesus appeals to Genesis 1–2 for His teaching, pastors and counselors ought to do so as well. That requires those involved in such ministry to delve deeply into the early chapters of Genesis and to establish very firm convictions based upon a sound and detailed exegesis of those chapters. Pastors and counselors without such a foundation are not adequately prepared to minister to their congregations. Burk, Closson, and Smothers offer further clarification:

God’s process in creating the world also seems to progress in glory from day one to day six, culminating in the creation of humanity as male and female in God’s image, informing humanity’s dignity, purpose, and worth. God’s creation of the world in six days and rest on the seventh inform our week—this point is explicitly mentioned in Exodus 20:11. God’s creation work in Genesis 1 and 2 not only gives us a kind of blueprint that God followed when creating the world but also a blueprint for our lives that we can follow.³⁶

The demands of biblical ministry do not allow pastors and counselors to take an agnostic approach to the literal six-day creation of the world and the historicity of the biblical account of the origins of the universe, the earth, and all its creatures, including the historicity of Adam and Eve as the originating head of the human race.

How can finite humans ever comprehend the perfections and immensity of their eternal God? The inability to fully understand who God is arises out of the immense difference existing between human beings and their Creator in nature and attributes

³⁵ The Gospels cite or allude to the early chapters of Genesis at least eighteen times: Matt 1:1 (“The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ,” Gen 5:1); 13:35 (“SINCE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD,” Gen 1:1); 19:4–6 (“from the beginning,” Gen 1:1, 27; 2:24); 23:35 (“the blood of righteous Abel,” Gen 4:8); 24:21 (“since the beginning of the world,” Gen 1:1), 37–39 (“just as the days of Noah were ... in those days before the flood ... until the day that Noah entered the ark,” Gen 6:5–7:23); 25:34 (“from the foundation of the world,” Gen 1:1); Mark 10:6–8 (“from the beginning of creation,” see Matt 19:4–6); 13:19 (“since the beginning of the creation,” see Matt 24:21); 16:15 (“all creation”); Luke 3:38 (“the son of Shem, the son of Noah, ... the son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God,” Gen 1:26; 2:7; 4:25–26; 5:1–32); 11:50–51 (“since the foundation of the world,” Gen 1:1; “the blood of Abel,” see Matt 23:35); 17:26–27 (see Matt 24:37–39); John 1:1–5 (“In the beginning,” Gen 1:1; “in the beginning”; “All things came into being through Him,” Gen 1:1–31; “the Light shines in the darkness,” Gen 1:3), 10 (“the world was made through Him,” Gen 1:1); 8:44 (“from the beginning”); 17:5 (“before the world was,” Gen 1:1”), 24 (“before the foundation of the world,” Gen 1:1”). Jesus is the speaker in thirteen of these passages. He accepted the Genesis record as historically accurate and its events as real.

³⁶ Burk, Closson, and Smothers, *Male & Female He Created Them*, 18.

(cf. Isa 55:9). That cognitive distance existed even between the unfallen Adam and his Creator—it predated the fall. “Because man is finite and God is infinite, if man is to know God it must come about by God’s revelation of himself to man.”³⁷ God did reveal Himself—in biblical creation doctrine.

Creation Doctrine and Consummation

The prophet Isaiah emphatically proclaimed that Yahweh was Creator of the heavens and the earth (Isa 40:21–28, see discussion above under “Creation and Comfort”). He also prophesied of the future new heavens and new earth (65:17–25):

“For behold, I am creating a new heavens and a new earth;
And the former things will not be remembered or come upon the heart.
But be joyful and rejoice forever in what I create;
For behold, I create Jerusalem *for* rejoicing
And her people *for* joy.
I will also rejoice in Jerusalem and be joyful in My people;
And there will no longer be heard in her
The voice of weeping and the voice of crying.
No longer will there be in it an infant *who lives but a few days*,
Or an old man who does not fulfill his days;
For the youth will die at the age of one hundred,
And the one who does not reach the age of one hundred
Will be *thought* accursed.
They will build houses and inhabit *them*;
They will also plant vineyards and eat their fruit.
They will not build and another inhabit;
They will not plant and another eat;
For as the lifetime of a tree, *so will be* the days of My people,
And My chosen ones will wear out the work of their hands.
They will not labor in vain,
Or bear *children* for terror;
For they are the seed of those blessed by Yahweh,
And their offspring with them.
And it will be that before they call, I will answer, and while they are still
speaking, I will hear.
The wolf and the lamb will graze together, and the lion will eat straw like the
ox; and dust will be the serpent’s food.³⁸
They will do no evil nor act corruptly in all My holy mountain,” says Yahweh.

³⁷ Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985), 153.

³⁸ John Goldingay, *Isaiah*, Understanding the Bible Commentary Series, eds. W. Ward Gasque, Robert L. Hubbard Jr., and Robert K. Johnston (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012), 369, stresses the inclusion of this reference: “here, more clearly than in Genesis 3:14–15, the description concludes with a promise that the serpent’s action will not spoil things (v. 25b). When we set the passage in a broader biblical context, that reference to the serpent also draws our attention to the fact that long, full, ordinary earthly life is designed to be continued as, or succeeded by, or transformed into, eternal life.” Creation doctrine in Isaiah 65 includes the totality of Genesis 1–3.

Throughout Isaiah 40–55 the prophet integrates the theme of creation doctrine with God’s subsequent works in the prophet’s time and on into the distant prophetic future. God will make the old creation totally new at the end, “not only its sorrows but everything in the old order, dimmed and diminished as it was by the infection of human sin, will undergo this great renewal.”³⁹ Nearly every Christian believes that God will instantaneously create the new heavens and new earth, rather than cause it to slowly evolve over millions of years. That raises an interesting question: If God will create instantaneously the new heavens and new earth, why could He not have created the original heavens and earth in six literal days the way Genesis 1 describes?

It is therefore reasonable, especially in the light of the Old Testament witness to the creation, to hold that the Bible as a whole is concerned with the future of creation, particularly in view of the evidence ... from the Synoptic Gospels of Christ as Lord of creation.⁴⁰

Indeed,

Creation was not simply the making of the world out of nothing, not even that world continually upheld by the providence of God, but the making of a world destined for perfection, completedness. To be a creature means to be a being called and directed to a future perfection.⁴¹

Just as God had created the second Adam righteous like the unfallen first Adam, so God will create the second heavens and earth with the perfection of the first heavens and earth. The kingdom of God at that time will be that which had already been determined “from the foundation of the world” (Matt 25:34). Gary Smith provides insight regarding the significance of the new creation:

The efforts of mankind will never fully transform this world into a better place; it will require the miraculous work of God to bring about the real change that people long for. God’s work of salvation is a marvelous creative effort in which he recreates the world and his chosen people into a new, totally unimaginable, and glorious kingdom where God dwells among mankind. Although the sinfulness of mankind has not defiled the heavens (though sinful angels have), this sounds like a complete redoing of Gen 1:1 after the destruction of this present sinful world (cf. 34:4). This new world with its transformed people will be so completely different that God’s servants will not remember the “former world” (48:13) of sin, suffering, hunger, death, and destruction. In fact, this new world will be so different that even the more positive aspects of the former things will probably fade from memory.⁴²

³⁹ J. Alec Motyer, *Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries 20, ed. Donald J. Wiseman (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1999), 450.

⁴⁰ Gunton, *Christ and Creation*, 33–34.

⁴¹ Gunton, 45–46.

⁴² Gary Smith, *Isaiah 40–66*, New American Commentary 15B, ed. E. Ray Clendenen and Kenneth A. Mathews (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2009), 718.

Both Isaiah and John recorded the revelation God gave them concerning the characteristics of the future new heavens and new earth as the residence of resurrected and glorified believers. Isaiah mentions the joy experienced by the inhabitants of the new heavens and earth along with the absence of weeping (Isa 65:18–19). John is even more explicit: “He will WIPE AWAY EVERY TEAR FROM THEIR EYES; and there will no longer be *any* death; there will no longer be *any* mourning, or crying, or pain” (Rev 21:4).

The old creation will be transformed into the new creation. The Bible’s flow from Genesis to Revelation reveals significant events occurring and then repeating in inverse order (a chiasmic arrangement) book-ended by the two creation events:

Original Creation (Gen 1:1)
Satan’s Freedom (Gen 3:1)
Worldwide Judgment (Gen 6–8)
Babel/Babylon (Gen 10–11)
...⁴³
Babylon (Rev 17–18)
Worldwide Judgment (Rev 19)
Satan’s Confinement (Rev 20)
New Creation (Rev 21)

As a result, eschatology (the doctrine of last things) recapitulates protology (the doctrine of beginnings) in inverse order. If the beginnings in Genesis are but mere myth, then the prophetic announcements of future events must also consist of myth. Both must be true and trustworthy, or neither. That must apply equally to the hope of heaven as the believer’s future residence no matter what the relationship might be between our heavenly residence and the new heavens and new earth.

Creation Doctrine and Celestial Residence

More than just a parallel to Isaiah 65:17–25, Psalm 102:23–28 reveals the hope of an anonymous afflicted believer—a hope involving continued existence in the presence of God.

He has afflicted my strength in the way;
He has shortened my days.
I say, “O my God, do not take me away in the midst of my days,
Your years are from generation to *all* generations.
Of old You founded the earth,
And the heavens are the work of Your hands.
Even they will perish, but You will remain;
And all of them will wear out like a garment;
Like clothing You will change them and they will be changed.
But You are the same,

⁴³ Other parallel events might be cited to fill the chiasmic structure out more completely. The center of the chiasmic structure is Jesus Himself.

And Your years will not come to an end.
The children of Your slaves will dwell *securely*,
And their seed will be established before You.

The psalmist trusts the eternal Creator God to establish His people in His presence. Grogan observes the psalmist's comparison of human transience with the way God will establish the godly "in his presence—eternally (v. 28)."⁴⁴ Starting with God as Creator allows the psalmist to conclude that He must be eternal, existing before creation. Since the Adamic sin-damaged creation will wear out and is subject to potential future non-existence, the Creator alone possesses the power and knowledge to change it all. Accepting the reality of both the original creation and the fall leads to faith in an unchanging Creator who will establish His new creation. The Creator will also populate the new creation with His servants whom He saves and preserves out of the old fallen creation.⁴⁵

Other psalms suggest believers enter into the presence of God after this life:

You will make known to me the path of life;
In Your presence is fullness of joy;
In Your right hand there are pleasures forever. (Ps 16:11)

As for me, I shall behold Your face in righteousness;
I will be satisfied with Your likeness when I awake. (Ps 17:15)

The New Testament, however, removes all doubt. Jesus Himself explained that He has gone to prepare a place for His followers:

Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, *there* you may be also. (John 14:1–3)

What kind of place is Jesus preparing? Perhaps we have a hint in 2 Corinthians 5:1, "For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Note the implication that the "building" is God's work and that it will be "eternal in the heavens."

⁴⁴ Grogan, *Psalms*, 172. In the theological section of this volume Grogan adds, "It is clear, however, in a small but significant number of psalms, that the ultimate destiny of the believing psalmist was in continued fellowship with God. He is convinced that the fellowship with God that he experienced during his lifetime would not be terminated by death but would go on and, indeed, in some way would be consummated (e.g., 17:15; 49:15; 73:24–26)" (423).

⁴⁵ James M. Hamilton, Jr., *Psalms*, Evangelical Biblical Theology Commentary 2, ed. T. Desmond Alexander, Thomas R. Schreiner, and Andreas J. Köstenberger (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Academic, 2021), 221: "when this heaven and earth have been worn out and changed (102:26 [MT 102:27]), the seed of God's servants will be established before him to praise him forever (102:18, 21–22 [MT 102:19, 22–23])."

The context makes it clear that Paul refers to dying and leaving our mortal body (vv. 6–8):

Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord—for we walk by faith, not by sight—we are of good courage and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.

The thought is quite consistent with what Paul penned in Philippians 1:21–24,

For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. But if *I am* to live *on* in the flesh, this *will mean* fruitful labor for me; and I do not know what I will choose. But I am hard-pressed between the two, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for *that* is very much better, yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake.

When we consider what the Scripture says about where Christ currently dwells, Revelation 4 with its description of the throne room of God in heaven comes to mind:

After these things I looked, and behold, a door *standing* open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like *the sound* of a trumpet speaking with me, said, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things.” Immediately I was in the Spirit, and behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne. And He who was sitting *was* like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance; and *there was* a rainbow around the throne, like an emerald in appearance. Around the throne *were* twenty-four thrones, and upon those thrones *I saw* twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white garments, and golden crowns on their heads. And out from the throne come flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder. And *there were* seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. And before the throne *there was something* like a sea of glass, like crystal. And in the center and around the throne, four living creatures full of eyes in front and behind. And the first creature *was* like a lion, and the second creature like a calf, and the third creature had a face like that of a man, and the fourth creature *was* like a flying eagle. And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within, and day and night they do not cease to say, “HOLY, HOLY, HOLY *is* THE LORD GOD, THE ALMIGHTY, WHO WAS AND WHO IS AND WHO IS TO COME.” And when the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, to Him who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne, saying, “Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power, for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created.”

Creation doctrine once again anchors the text with the proclamation of the twenty-four elders (v. 11). As in Genesis 1:1 God is the focal point, the center of attention. Why? Because He created all things. That is heaven's theme. Believers who presently deny

creation doctrine or claim to be agnostic about it will hear it proclaimed emphatically and repeatedly in heaven. Pastoral ministry must give the theme equal emphasis when teaching about the believers' everlasting home in the presence of God.

Conclusion

Pastoral ministry without the integration of creation doctrine tends to reflect the worldview of secular humanists rather than the revelation provided by the almighty Creator in His inerrant Word. Creation doctrine as a biblical theme saturates biblical theology. Creation doctrine is the gate to many of the great doctrines and truths of Scripture. The doctrine of Christ stands firmly on the foundation of His Creatorship as one of the keys to understanding His deity. Creation doctrine identifies one's relationship to the community of believers. Biblical counseling encounters creation doctrine when guiding people through difficult situations characterizing this fallen world. Creation doctrine offers biblical counselors a tool for dealing with the believer's commitment to God, His Word, and His church. It also enters into the provision of comfort for believers afflicted with suffering and weariness. Counselors must delve deeply in creation doctrine to deal with those facing the conflicting views of worldly culture with regard to gender, sexuality, and marriage. Creation doctrine also impacts the world's and the believer's futures. Pastors and biblical counselors cannot ignore the early chapters of Genesis because the rest of Scripture and their Savior do not ignore those chapters. Truth, biblical inerrancy, and biblical integrity begin with Genesis 1–11.