

# THE 1689 BAPTIST CONFESSION OF FAITH

## Creation (1)

### A. Introduction

1. Two things we are commanded to do as elders are to watch and to hold.

We are to watch what we believe, to make sure we are believing what God's Word says.

"Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers." (1 Timothy 4:16)

We are to hold firmly to the truths taught in God's Word.

"He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it." (Titus 1:9)

It is vital we do these two things, not just for our own sake, but also for the members of this church and in fact those who live in the community God has placed us in.

To help us to watch and to hold, we are spending our elders' meeting working through the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith a paragraph or so at a time.

2. After discussing God's Decree in Chapter 3, the Confession, in the next two chapters, shows how God's decrees are executed.

As Question 11 of The Baptism Catechism states:

*Q: How doth God execute His decrees?*

*A: God executeth His decrees in the works of creation and providence.*

The Catechism here is reflecting the Confession's order of creation then providence, with chapter 4's focus being on Creation, beginning with an overview of creation in paragraph 1.

*"In the beginning it pleased God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for the manifestation of the glory of His eternal power, wisdom, and goodness, to create or make the world, and all things therein, whether visible or invisible, in the space of six days, and all very good."*

What do we learn about the creation of the world?

### B. It was created by the Triune God

1. Creation is a work of God.

*"In the beginning it pleased God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit... to create or make the world, and all things therein, whether visible or invisible..."*

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." (Genesis 1:1)

2. Creation is a work that each person of the Trinity was involved in.

God the Father.

"...there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for who we live..." (1 Corinthians 8:6)

God the Son.

"For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him." (Colossians 1:16)

"By his Son... through whom he made the universe." (Hebrews 1:2)

"Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made." (John 1:3)

God the Holy Spirit.

"Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters." (Genesis 1:2)

"When you send your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the earth." (Psalm 104:30)

"The Spirit of God has made me; the breath of the Almighty gives me life." (Job 33:4)

### **C. It was created to display God's glory**

#### 1. Why did God create the world?

It wasn't because He was lonely.

It wasn't because He was lacking.

It was to display or manifest His glory – to put on display His excellencies.

*"...for the manifestation of the glory of His eternal power, wisdom, and goodness..."*

"The heavens declare the glory of God, the skies proclaim the work of his hands." (Psalm 19:1)

#### 2. In creation, God reveals to humans His invisible attributes.

"For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse." (Romans 1:20)

People cannot say that God has not made it clear to them that He exists – to deny this is the height of stupidity.

"The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." (Psalm 14:1)

### **D. It was created in six days**

#### 1. God created all things out of nothing (ex nihilo) in six days.

*"...in the space of six days..."*

"For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy." (Exodus 20:11)

#### 2. When this line was originally written, there is little doubt that the authors of the Confession understood the days to be 24 hour days.

The phrase "in the space of six days" was lifted from a sermon by John Calvin and showed a rejection of the other main creation theory around at that time, which had been proposed by Augustine, that everything was created instantaneously.

In our day, there has been much discussion about what is meant by 'day' in Genesis 1.

Are they actual days? i.e. literal twenty-four hour periods.

Or are they analogical days? i.e. not literally twenty-four hour periods but the days are analogous to a 24-hour day.

It is possible to hold an analogous day position and be a faithful believer in Christ who takes the Bible seriously.

It is possible to hold to an analogous day position and subscribe to this paragraph, because the word 'days' is not precisely defined as being 24 hours, even though we know that those who wrote the Confession understood "in the space of six days" to be referring to actual days.

### **E. It was created very good**

1. The world God created was very good.

*"...and all very good."*

"God saw all that he had made, and it was very good." (Genesis 1:31)

It was very good because it was exactly how God wanted it to be.

It was very good because it displayed His glory.

It was very good because it brought God delight and satisfaction.

It was very good because there was no sin, no disease, no death, and no danger.

2. But the world God created was not perfect.

There were still people to be made (through Adam and Eve being fruitful and multiplying) and an earth to subdue.

There was still the possibility of everything going horribly wrong.

### **F. How then shall we lead?**

1. We are to defend the church against the false teaching of evolution by teaching the truth of God's Word.

"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." (Hebrews 11:3)

2. We are to lead the church to praise our glorious Creator who is powerful, wise and good.

"You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being." (Revelation 4:11)

3. We are to serve as elders in a way that displays God's glory.

"So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God." (1 Corinthians 10:31)

4. We are to affirm the goodness of creation and enjoy it as a gift given to us by God.

"For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving." (1 Timothy 4:4)