



# Introducing Our Faith The Living God

Week 5 – God and Creation

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## Overview of this week

- ❖ Themes of Creation (from Migliore)
  - > God is the creator
  - > Creation is good
  - > Creatures are dependent on God
- ❖ Creation and evolution
  - > The stakes
  - > The basic debate
  - > Where we get off track

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## God is the Creator

- ❖ God is creator, we are not!
  - > God is the source of all that exists; God created out of nothingness (*ex nihilo*)
  - > The Lordship of Jesus.
- ❖ This is God's world, not ours.
- ❖ God's creation is a free act of grace.
  - > God is generous and welcoming
- ❖ God's creation is totally consistent with God's character.
  - > The Relational God

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*Creation is Good*

- ❖ What God creates is good.
  - We are not naïve about the brokenness of life and the reality of evil. Things are not as they should be. All of creation groans, awaiting its own redemption (Romans 8:18-25).
- ❖ We are made in God’s image.
- ❖ We are the “trustees,” not the owners, of what God has created.

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*Creation means we are dependent on God*

- ❖ Our dependence is radical!
  - We are dependent on God for the “gift of life, for new life, and for the final fulfillment of life.” (from Migliore)
- ❖ Our hold on life is fragile; we are not necessary!
  - Calvin said, “We are not our own, we belong to God.”
  - We are like grass or the flowers of the fields – grass withers and flowers fade. (Isaiah 40:6-8)
- ❖ It is God who gives us our being.
  - Paul wrote that it is God, in whom we live, move, and exist. (Acts 17)

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*Creation & evolution*

- ❖ The stakes?
  - If we do not understand the questions and issues, we expose ourselves and our children to unneeded assaults on our faith and the Christian understanding of God.
- ❖ Here is the question =>
  - How do we account for everything that exists?
  - This is a fundamental question that drives so much of our lives and our society, even when we don’t think about it very much!

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## Three basic choices

- ❖ Theism
  - There is a God who created all that is and did so willfully, with purpose.
  - This choice gets us only part way to the Christian understanding of God.
    - A god with purpose could be the absentee landlord!
- ❖ Materialism
  - All that is can be accounted for by time and chance working on some eternal "stuff."
  - There is no overarching purpose or direction.
- ❖ Pantheism
  - God and the material universe are one. Our idea that they aren't is really just an illusion (*maya* in Hinduism), from which we need to be freed.

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## Was Darwin right?

- ❖ His basic claim
  - Species evolve through the operation of natural selection on random mutations.
- ❖ Can this explain the creation of new species?
  - Nearly everyone agrees – yes.
- ❖ Does it explain all of the development of life on earth? (The claim of "Darwinism.")
  - Perhaps not. Increasing numbers of scientists see the evidence of design in nature.
- ❖ When Darwinism becomes Materialism, it becomes a theological claim.

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## Intelligent Design

- ❖ Scientific signposts to God!
  - It is a little ironic that science proceeds only because it assumes that the universe is orderly and predictable, when so many scientists are uncomfortable confronting the source of the predictability.
  - Science is a way of knowing. Science is method – a method that only disproves, never proves.
- ❖ Molecular biology and the mousetrap
  - Irreducible complexity
- ❖ DNA
  - Specified complexity
- ❖ The fine-tuning of the cosmos

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*How do we help our youth (and ourselves!)*

- ❖ Better education and understanding.
  - > Perhaps we need to be more proactive in preparing our youth for college.
- ❖ Be willing to point out theological claims when they are made.
  - > The claim that we are the result of time and chance working on eternal "stuff" is theology. The claim that bird = cat = dog = boy is a theological claim.
- ❖ Be willing to make the moral claims that stem from our belief in God.
  - > Scientific materialism provides no basis for any absolute moral claims. What is moral becomes what is believed to be best for the most people – an exercise in raw power.

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