

We Believe Part 3

We are examining the core beliefs of the Christian faith and using the Apostles' Creed as our framework. I want us to look one more time at the opening confession of our creed. **We believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth.** I want us to consider the significance and the implications for us. What difference does it make if we have a Creator or if we simply evolved from something else?

I don't want to get into a debate about evolution. I'm not qualified. I'm not a scientist, I'm a pastor. I recognize science raises questions about the origins of the universe and its age and about life on earth, but I am amazed at the assertions made by those embracing only an evolutionary theory concerning the existence of all things. For instance, Wikipedia, the online dictionary states matter of factly, **"All life on Earth is descended from a last universal ancestor that lived approximately 3.8-3.5 billion years ago. Repeated speciation and the divergence of life can be inferred from shared sets of biochemical and morphological traits, or by sequencing shared DNA sequences....[The last universal common ancestor is defined as] "the organism from which all organisms now living on Earth descend. Thus it is the most recent common ancestor of all current life on Earth. The earliest evidences for life on Earth are graphite found to be biogenic in 3.7 billion year old metasedimentary rocks discovered in Western Greenland and microbial mat fossils found in 3.48 billion year old sandstone discovered in Western Australia."**

Not to be dismissive, but what that says is they are absolutely certain that all life on earth descended from a common ancestor and the evidence they have for it is a piece of coal found among some rocks in Greenland and some tiny fossilized stuff on a rock found in Australia. Notice the word "inferred". That may be the most important word in the quote because when it comes down to it, in spite of the confident declaration that all life descended from this common ancestor, it is all inferred. And there is that one nagging question that simply won't go away: **If all life evolved from a common ancestor, where did the common ancestor come from?** The truth is, evolution needs creation because there had to be something from which to evolve. Someone or something created the thing from which all life evolved. In the beginning, before there were carbon atoms and microbial mat fossils in sandstone, in the beginning God created.

Our Father Almighty, the maker of heaven and earth, needs nothing else. God could

have set things in motion so they would evolve if he chose, but in the beginning there was nothing but God. The universe couldn't have evolved because again, there was nothing from which it could evolve. In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

One more nagging and unresolved question: **Even if it was true that all life descended from this common ancestor, where did the soul and spirit come from?** The human body is organic life, but what about the soul and spirit? Peter Kreeft wrote, **"The soul cannot evolve. Spirit cannot evolve from matter; it would be easier to get blood from a stone. No matter how many atoms you line up, or how complicated their lineup, you cannot get a wholly different thing – thought, consciousness, reason, self-awareness – from mere bits of matter.... Science can say absolutely nothing about where souls come from, for souls simply are not the sort of thing you can see or measure." ...Peter Kreeft**

The original question we asked was what difference does it make whether we were created by God or we evolved? If we evolved by blind chance then there is no divine purpose or plan for our lives. No soul, no real meaning to our existence. The only meaning or purpose is what we create or define for ourselves. That means there can be no right or wrong, there is no higher standard by which to measure morals or values. Be a Nazi, be a terrorist, be a Christian, it doesn't matter. It's all the same thing. It's just biology. We are no more significant than any other life form or organism on the planet. We just climbed out of the swamp like all other life.

But if there is a Creator, if the Creed is correct and the Bible is true, if in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth and all that exists, including us, then everything is different! What difference does it make? We have been created in the image of God! **"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.'" Genesis 1:27-28.**

We bear the image of God. Not in a physical sense. We aren't saying God has arms and legs and looks like a bigger, stronger, better version of us. We bear his image in that we have intelligence and the ability to think, to reflect. We are unique among his creations. We are rational beings with the ability to reason and understand, to recognize and discern good from evil. We bear his image in that we have free will, the ability to choose, to obey and to disobey.

We bear his image in that we too are relational and spiritual, we were created to know God and be in relationship with him and with others. We bear his image in that we too have the ability to create, to appreciate beauty. We bear his image in our ability to love, to worship. Though the image of God in us has been marred by sin, by his grace and mercy we can yet reflect his life and his light. Created in his image we have purpose, we have extraordinary value, our life and our existence has meaning. We have been designed by and created by an all wise, all powerful, awesome and wonderful God who breathed into us with his very breath and we became living souls!

We were created by God and bear his image. That affects our concept of ourselves. That means we must consider all life sacred and valuable. Because we bear the image of God, from conception to natural death we must respect life and honor the purposes of God.

We were created by God, male and female, and told to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. There was an order and purpose to God creating male and female. We bear his image in the sense of creating new life. We call it procreation, the begetting of offspring. The creation of male and female and establishing marriage as the relationship between one man and one woman was part of God's order and design for creation.

We were created by God and given dominion over the earth and all other creatures. He created us higher than the animals because we alone bear his image. Because we bear his image, we are to live as good and faithful stewards over all creation. It is still his creation and we must respect and honor it. That's why we shouldn't mistreat animals or pollute the earth and environment. We are not to dominate and violate creation for our own selfish ends, nor are we to worship creation and created things above God. Our care of the planet and created things should reflect our understanding that we were created by God and we bear his image.

Remember – what we believe affects how we live. We were created by God and consequently we owe God our very existence. We owe God everything. Speaking of God to the Athenians in Greece, the apostle Paul declared, **“For in Him we live and move and have our being.” Acts 17:28.** Everything belongs to him. We are to honor him with our life and our being, with our choices, our actions and our words. Think of how painful it would be as a parent to “create” and birth a child, lovingly raise them and provide for them, meet their every need, devote your life to them, and then have them totally reject you, ignore you, disregard you in

every sense. That might give us a tiny glimpse of what God must experience as we turn our face from him and reject him over and over again, ignoring him and disregarding his good plans for us.

We owe him everything. He is the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. Peter Kreeft wrote, **"No idea in the history of human thought has ever made more difference than the idea of Creation."Peter Kreeft**

Consider not only what creation says about us, but consider what creation reveals about God. Remember the apostle Paul wrote, **"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** What does creation reveal about God?

Creation reveals a God of order and faithfulness. Mark Lanier in his book, *Christianity on Trial* wrote, "The heavens show precision and predictability. In other words, the heavens are reliable in what they do and how they do it. Scientists are able to calculate orbits with precision. They can send rockets that will place a person on the moon. They can speak of the future eclipses with full accuracy. Each aspect of the universe holds not only an accurate future but also a consistent past."

Think about the star that led the wise men to Jesus. Consider the preciseness of its appearance, what with light traveling at 186,000 miles per second. God knew exactly when to create a star so its light would appear at just the right time to lead the Magi to Jesus. You can attempt the calculations, I just know creation reveals a God of order and faithfulness. The Psalmist declared, **"The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands."** **Psalm 19:1** Precise in his timing, ordered and faithful in his creation and governance of the universe. I believe we can trust him and his timing, that He will be just as faithful, just as reliable in all of his dealings with his children. Trust the God of order and faithfulness.

Creation reveals a God of infinite power, wisdom, beauty and generosity. For God to create the world out of nothing means he is infinitely powerful. When we consider the precision, the delicate balance that sustains this universe, we know he is infinitely wise. When we look at the diverse beauty of the world he has created, we see evidence of God the artist in everything. And when we think of all that he has created, realizing he did not create out of need,

it is an indication of his generosity, that he created this world for us to inhabit, to steward and to enjoy. How else can you explain the extraordinary beauty of his creation? It is a reflection of his beauty, his goodness, his nature expressed in his creation. Look around at the beauty of the earth! We are drawn to beauty because a good and beautiful God created this world.

Augustine, referring to the things of beauty to which he had been drawn wrote, **“It was you then, O Lord, who made them. You who are beautiful, for they too are beautiful. You who are good, for they too are good. You who are, for they too are. But they are not beautiful and good as you are beautiful and good. Nor do they have their being as you the Creator have your being. In comparison with you, they have neither beauty nor goodness nor being at all.”**...Augustine All of creation testifies and points to the Father Almighty as maker of heaven and earth yet in all its beauty, it is only a mere reflection of the beauty, splendor, glory and goodness of God.

Creation reveals an eternal God. Since he created all that is from nothing, since he was “in the beginning” but he had no beginning, that means God is eternal in his being. He always has been and he always will be. The bible says, **“Abraham... called upon the name of the Lord, the Eternal God.” Genesis 21:33** (King James Version refers to him as “The Everlasting God”.) And in the book of Deuteronomy, **“The Eternal God is your refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms.” Deuteronomy 33:27** Moses declared, **“Lord you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations. Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.” Psalm 90:1-2**

The eternal God is our Heavenly Father, the one who was and is and is to come. **That God is eternal means he is unchanging in his attributes.** God is love. God is holy. God is faithful. God is just. He always has been and He will not cease to be nor will his attributes cease to be. He won't stop being who he has revealed himself to be. That means we can rely upon him, we can trust him. He is not flighty or capricious, changing his mind on a whim or like us giving in to his feelings. He is the eternal God, the same yesterday, today and forever. It means he keeps his word and fulfills his promise. That is good news for us. But consider it also means his attitude toward sin does not change. What he has said was sin and disobedience remains sin and disobedience. Don't expect him to change his mind or adapt himself to the

times. There is no reason he should. He is not learning or growing or becoming something else. He is. Remember he revealed his name to Moses as "I AM." He is the eternal God, unchanging in his character. The bible says simply, **"I the Lord do not change."** **Malachi 3:6**

That God is eternal means he is inescapable. We can't get around him. We can't ignore him. If it was another person and you had a problem with them, you could ignore them, avoid them, hope they would change their mind, forget about you, move away or perhaps they could die and you wouldn't have to deal with them. Not so with the eternal God. He doesn't change his mind. You can't outlive him because he does not die. He won't forget you. You can't escape him. You can avoid him in this life, to your own detriment and eternal destruction, but eventually you will face him.

Think about what it means to you that the Creator is the Eternal God. Consider all we've said about God, his eternal character and nature, his divine attributes, his omnipotent power and might. Consider that the eternal God is beyond us, above us in every conceivable fashion. Then consider that this eternal God, the everlasting God, desires to make himself known to us. How could he accomplish this? The God whom the Psalmist said created the starry host by the breath of his mouth (Psalm 33), how could he reveal himself in all his complexity and power to us in a way that we could understand? In a way to which we could relate? In a way that would not terrify us? How could he show himself to us? That's where we begin next Sunday.

But consider this: This God who is eternal, this God who is inescapable, isn't out to harm you, he is out to love you. He wants to save you and redeem you, to be in relationship with you. That image of God that was marred and distorted in us through sin, he wants to fix that, to make us his own again. He wants to change you and make you whole by his grace and power. I encourage you to stop running from the eternal, inescapable God and surrender to the beauty of his saving grace. His plans for you are extraordinary and they are good. He has created you and He has an amazing plan for your life. The Almighty God longs for you to know Him as your Creator and Father. **We believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.** Do you? Would you like to really know your Heavenly Father? And more than believing in, are you ready to believe upon? Are you ready to place your faith in Christ as your Savior and Lord? When you do, you will know the Father Almighty in a personal way, in the way he meant for you to know him from the beginning.

