

*From*  
**Creation**  
*to* **Salvation**

What Jesus and the New Testament authors  
believed about Genesis

Lita Cosner

# CONTENTS

	Foreword.....	7
CHAPTER 1	Introduction.....	11
<b>Section 1</b>	The doctrine of creation in the New Testament .....	19
CHAPTER 2	What God was doing before creation.....	21
CHAPTER 3	God the Creator .....	33
CHAPTER 4	Jesus, the agent of creation.....	55
CHAPTER 5	The destruction of the universe.....	79
CHAPTER 6	The new earth.....	99
<b>Section 2</b>	Adam in the New Testament.....	115
CHAPTER 7	The image of God.....	117
CHAPTER 8	The Fall of Adam.....	131
CHAPTER 9	Eve's offspring, the serpent, and his offspring....	143
CHAPTER 10	The arrival of the Offspring .....	169
CHAPTER 11	Christ, the Last Adam .....	181
CHAPTER 12	Conclusion.....	199
	Scripture Index.....	203

# Foreword

Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr, Th.D.

Author, *As It Is Written: The Genesis Account Literal or Literary?*

**A** Christian once cleverly complained: “If God thought that creation was so important, why didn’t he put it closer to the front of the Bible?” This amusing query speaks powerfully to the significance of creation in Scripture: the Bible actually opens with this doctrine.

Sadly though, creation is perhaps the most defied, derided, and denied doctrine in all of Scripture. Of course, we expect that from secular humanists. They are, after all, “**darkened in their understanding**” and in “**the futility of their minds**” (Ephesians 4:17–18). Therefore they are compelled to actively “**suppress the truth in unrighteousness**” (Romans 1:18) in denying God.

But tragically the doctrine of creation is deemed an embarrassment even to many Bible-affirming Christians. This ought not be! How can we affirm the Bible while denying its very foundation?

In this insightful, practical, and compelling book, Lita Cosner demonstrates why it is impossible for the truly Bible-believing Christian to deny recent, six-day creation. She does so by showing how Scripture presents us with a holistic, inter-connected worldview. This book will be an invaluable resource for distributing to Christians who do not understand the significance of the creation-evolution debate or who even allow that evolution is true simultaneously with Scripture.

The primary point of this book is captured in its striking opening statement: “If you don’t understand the doctrine of creation, you can’t properly understand the doctrine of salvation.” Then she carefully unfolds her point by ranging all over Scripture, but focusing especially on the New Testament—which many Christians do not realize speaks to the creation issue. And what is more, it is the very doctrine of salvation itself that presents us with a powerful argument for the biblical approach to creation.

After the important Introduction, *Creation to Salvation* opens by considering the intriguing question: What was God doing before creation? This is an important concern for understanding the significance of creation to biblical doctrine, even to the doctrine of God itself. Many unbelievers think they have the Christian off balance when they ask, “But who created God?” Cosner shows how that is not the case.

Her primary concern in the book, however, is to show the strong linkage between creation and salvation. All Bible-believing Christians recognize the significance—the *eternal* significance—of the glorious doctrine of salvation. And once they admit to the biblical doctrine of salvation, Cosner shows that they must then commit to the biblical doctrine of creation if they are at all logical.

This book is designed for laymen. Therefore Cosner endeavors to demonstrate in careful, easy-to-understand language just how inextricably creation is bound up with the doctrine of salvation. Important matters treated include the consummate new creation (to which our salvation looks); the historical significance of Adam to the doctrine of sin (which entails the necessity of salvation); the image of God created, corrupted, and renewed in Christ (which captures the significance of salvation); the central theme of Scripture in tracing out the “**seed of the woman**” from Genesis 3:15 to the coming of Christ (which traces the biblical history of salvation); and more.

To add to the value of this book, Cosner has included questions at the end of each chapter to provoke further study. She has also provided some recommended resources to supplement personal study.

If we believe in the Bible as the word of God, we must believe in the doctrine of creation. Despite the railings of the world, we must have the faith of the little girl in the first grade who was challenged by her teacher. During art time, the little girl was drawing a picture of Jonah being swallowed by a fish. Her teacher looked at the picture and said: “You know that Jonah could not have been swallowed by a fish and lived. It would have killed him.” The little girl insisted he was swallowed by a fish, but the teacher just laughed.

The little girl then said: “When I get to heaven I am going to ask Jonah if he was swallowed by a fish.” To which the teacher responded: “What if Jonah didn’t go to heaven?” The little girl replied: “Well then you can ask him.”

We must have the confidence in God’s word that this child exhibited. And Lita Cosner shows us why we must.



## *Chapter 1*

# Introduction

Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom he also created the world (Hebrews 1:1–2).

**I**f you don't understand the doctrine of creation, you can't properly understand the doctrine of salvation.

That may seem like a provocative statement, but it is one I intend to show throughout this book. The first chapters of Genesis tell us how God created the world and how mankind became sinners. The rest of the Bible tells us how God did not give up on His creation, but set the plan of salvation into motion culminating in the death and resurrection of Jesus, and finally in His future return and the resurrection of the dead at the end of history.

Biblical creation has never been under as much attack as it is today. Atheistic scientists proclaim that the world is billions of years old and that humans and all other life descended from a common ancestor. Many professing Christians accept evolution and the evolutionary timescale, and even regard belief in biblical creation as a possible stumbling block to faith in Christ. In this environment, biblical creationists are accused of being divisive and unnecessarily literalistic in our interpretation of Genesis,

which is often seen as a secondary doctrine at best. How can we respond?

If we understand the foundational importance of creation in Scripture and in explaining the Gospel, we can confidently defend the Bible's history. Unlike many other religions, Christianity depends on historical events. We believe that Jesus actually died during Passover in the early 30s ad, and that He was raised on the third day. The central claim of Christianity is that a supernatural event occurred *in history*. Without the death and resurrection of Christ, the Christian faith has no Gospel to offer.

But our dependence on historical events goes back much further when we explain why Jesus had to die. He died to save us from our sins, but where did sin come from in the first place? How did humanity come to need salvation? The biblical explanation is consistent: God created man to be in relationship with Him, but Adam (the historical first man who was supernaturally created on Day 6) disobeyed God's command, resulting in death and suffering for the whole creation. We all sin because our universal forefather, Adam, sinned.

When we embrace this history, we have a consistent foundation for our worldview and we can be confident when we share the Gospel, even when faced with opposition from unbelievers and compromise. We often forget that the Bible originally was written in a context where there were also competing cults and philosophies who opposed God's Word. Against these false systems, the Bible speaks about the true God and how to be brought into a proper relationship with Him. This message has never been popular with the cultural and philosophical elite, yet Scripture nowhere changes its message to be more palatable to the culture. Likewise, we are called to stand on the truth of Scripture, especially in the exact places where Scripture contradicts the current thinking.

## **The foundational truth of creation**

Genesis 1–11 gives us the *foundation* for the doctrine of creation. It tells us *what happened*, yet contrary to the claims of those who want to downplay its historical meaning, it does not

elaborate on the theological importance of the historical events. To understand the theological significance, we have to look at various other places in Scripture which elaborate on *what it means*. And when we look at the rest of Scripture, almost every doctrine finds its origin in Genesis 1–11. For instance, almost everything we can say about our relationship to God is somehow linked to the truth that He is our Creator.

Some with other views of creation try to divorce theology from a historical reading of Genesis. However, what is left is an impoverished theology that cannot deal properly with the statements of the later biblical authors who clearly viewed Genesis as historical, and who used this history to make theological statements.

## The New Testament doctrine of creation

Because many think the Bible's statements about creation are largely confined to Genesis, it might be surprising to learn the New Testament gives us a substantial advance in our understanding of the doctrine of creation: the role of the Son in creation, and how God plans to redeem the fallen creation with a final restoration. The New Testament tells us what Jesus was doing during Creation Week, giving us a much fuller understanding of the Trinitarian doctrine of creation.

This means that *our Saviour is also our Creator*, and this has some important implications for our faith, which we will explore throughout the book. It also poses serious problems for Christians who accept evolutionary or old-age views, because Jesus, along with every New Testament author, quotes and uses Genesis in ways that make it clear that He believed it is straightforward history. And who better to tell us about creation than our Creator?

A common strategy is to try to retain the *theology* from the doctrine of creation while rejecting its *history*, and there are a number of ways to do this, but all have the same fundamental problem, because Scripture presents a God who acts in history. This means when the Bible says that God has acted, it is both *theologically* and *historically* significant. It is historically significant because it is an event *in history* that was recorded in such



a way as to be accessible to us, and it is theologically significant because *God did it*, and therefore it can tell us something about Him.

Because the Bible bases theology on God's *historical* acts, it is important for its historical record to be true. If it is not, then we can no longer derive any *theological* truth from the accounts. This is as much the case for Paul's argument in Romans 5 as it is for Moses' account of the Fall in Genesis, because in both cases history and theology are inseparably linked.

This is a particularly important point, because many mainstream historians and even theologians and Bible scholars are attacking the Bible's timeline and the miraculous events it records. But the same historical sensibility which says that God could not have created in six literal days, or that the Red Sea could not have been parted, would also say that dead men do not rise; yet Paul wrote: "**And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain**" (1 Corinthians 15:14).

## **How does the New Testament use creation themes?**

It is important to understand the intent of the New Testament authors (and the Holy Spirit who inspired them) as we look at the creation references. The New Testament authors don't retell the creation narrative; they already had Genesis in their Scriptures and they assumed their readers already knew what it teaches. So while they never *contradict* Genesis, they do not feel the need to repeat more of it than serves their immediate point. If they had ever felt the need to revise or correct anything, or even to clarify that Genesis was only meant to be taken as a metaphor, they would have had the opportunity to do so. Instead, they simply assumed Genesis is history, and used it as the foundation of their theology.

Because they could assume this shared foundation, they drew upon it heavily to make certain theological points. For instance, we can look at Jesus' argument about divorce in Matthew 19:3–9 and Mark 10:2–12. The Jews used Moses' permission for divorce as proof that it is God's positive will.

But Jesus points to a time before the Law, before sin, to God's original intent in creating man and woman, citing Genesis 1:27 and 2:24 as real history (Mark 10:6–7). We will look at this passage in more detail later, but the point here is that Jesus can even use the *timing* of events in salvation history to say that God's original creation reflected God's real intent for marriage. His later permission for divorce in the Mosaic Law was simply a concession to human wickedness in order to avoid worse abuses (“from the beginning it was not so”).

Another idea which permeates the New Testament is that God works the same way or consistently throughout history. So when the New Testament authors speak about how God works through Christ, they draw analogies from history. So when he is explaining how Christ imparts salvation to His people, Paul points to how Adam's sin tainted everyone who came after him—it's the same idea (Romans 5:12–21). When explaining why Jesus seemed to have delayed His coming for so long, Peter explains that the Lord is doing the same thing that He was doing in Noah's day—and that His coming will be as sudden and catastrophic as the Flood (2 Peter 3:4–10).

These uses of creation do not undermine the historical reality of the events described in Genesis 1–11; they *depend* on it. If Adam was not an actual person who actually sinned, and if Adam's sin has not actually affected every person who has ever lived, there is no basis for comparing Adam with Jesus! If the global Flood was not an actual catastrophic event that wiped everyone off the face of the earth except for those in the Ark, there is no basis for comparing it with the Second Coming.

## Larger themes

There are some places where an underlying creation theme cannot be neatly summarized in a few sentences, but it is nevertheless present and vital for understanding the wider structure of the book. For instance, John introduces Jesus as the Logos who is God and the agent of creation. Throughout the Gospel, John presents Jesus as the divine Creator, and this creation theme is

actually critical for correctly understanding his intent in writing the Gospel.

Revelation is another book with a larger creation theme. In John's vision, the fallen creation is 'uncreated' in a series of drastic judgments, and the "ancient serpent" (Revelation 12:9; 20:2) is defeated. Then New Jerusalem is presented as a new Eden—complete with the Tree of Life, the unmediated presence of God, and the complete absence of sin and its consequences (Revelation 22).

And even in writings where the creation elements are not at the forefront of the author's mind or referenced directly in the text, the doctrine of creation is foundational to the biblical writer's worldview. For instance, every time the Bible talks about sin, the origin of sin in Genesis is relevant. So the biblical *worldview* of the writers is significant even in places where Genesis 1–11 is not explicitly referenced.

## **The Christ-centered doctrine of creation**

As stated earlier, one major advance the New Testament authors have to the doctrine of Creation is their *Christological* or Christ-centered reading of Genesis. They are writing in light of the revelation of Jesus, hence the full doctrine of the Trinity is applied to Genesis to tell us what the Persons of the Godhead were doing. To the New Testament authors, Jesus is the Creator Himself, or more precisely, the agent of creation. His sinless life and atoning death are the reversal of Adam's sin, and His future work at the time of His return will completely undo the Fall and defeat Satan once and for all.

This means that to understand Christ and His work correctly, we have to have a correct understanding of the biblical teaching about creation. And to understand the biblical teaching about creation correctly, we have to understand Jesus' role as the Creator. Because if Jesus is not the agent of God's creation, we can't make sense of what the New Testament says about how Christ is able to save us.

When we understand the doctrine of creation correctly, it will revolutionize our understanding of Scripture. We will be more

confident when sharing our faith, and we will be able to answer some key questions that come up about death and suffering. The last thing we should want to do is compromise on such a glorious doctrine.



### Resources for further study

Cosner, L., and Bates, G., Did God create over billions of years? *Creation* 35(2):50–52, 2013; [creation.com/billions](http://creation.com/billions).

Grigg, R., Genesis—the seedbed of all Christian doctrine; [creation.com/seedbed](http://creation.com/seedbed), 26 April 2007.

Sarfati, J., *The Genesis Account*, CBP, 2015.

### Questions for reflection

1. What view of creation do you hold? Why?
2. Can a long-age or evolutionary view of origins be properly called Christian if it can be shown that Jesus did not hold that view?
3. What is the difference between what Genesis says about creation, and what the rest of Scripture says about it?
4. Is it possible to reject the Bible's *history* and retain its *theology*? Why or why not?



---

## SECTION 1

---

# The doctrine of creation in the New Testament

**T**oday, many Christians are embarrassed by the doctrine of creation, because it seems to contradict current evolutionary ‘science’. However, a plain reading of Scripture will not allow us to side-step this foundational teaching. God’s activity in creation is, in many ways, definitional of who He is when we speak of His relationship to His creation. Scripture can speak of God as the Creator in contrast to idols created by men, as in numerous Old Testament polemic attacks on idolatry (Deuteronomy 4:28; Psalm 78:58; Isaiah 40:18ff). No creature stands on even ground with the Creator.

The New Testament is no less clear about creation. In fact, there is an important advance given in the New Testament: it reveals God the Son’s role in the creation and upholding of the universe (John 1; Colossians 1:16–17; Hebrews 1:3). With the full revelation of the doctrine of the Trinity, the act of creation is understood as a cooperative act between the three Persons of the Trinity as they act in complete harmony and agreement.

It is impossible to ‘unravel’ the doctrine of creation from the apostles’ thinking about the doctrine of salvation. For them, the disobedience of our first parents was catastrophic and had devastating consequences not only for their descendants (Romans

5:12–21; 1 Corinthians 15), but the entire cosmos (Romans 8:18–23). Christ’s sinless life, sacrificial death, and triumphant resurrection then lays the groundwork for His eschatological return and the restoration of creation, reversing the effects of the Fall.

Creation was also used to ground *practical* doctrines as well. Questions of marriage (Matthew 19:1–9) and order within the church (1 Corinthians 11:2–12; 1 Timothy 2:8–14) were decided based on details of creation. God as Creator was a theme of evangelism to Gentile communities who would not necessarily be familiar with the Hebrew Scriptures (Acts 14:8–18). And God’s power and sovereignty as the Creator was used as a comfort to Christians who were experiencing persecution and social stigma because of their association with Christ (Hebrews 1).

The New Testament’s use of creation means that if we reject a plain interpretation of Genesis, we lose our ability to defend marriage as Jesus did; we cannot explain how Christ’s death is able to save all who trust in Him as Paul did; we cannot explain the significance of Christ’s death for the restoration of creation; we cannot use the same analogies to talk about the eschatological judgment, and so on.

All this means that while it may be possible to be a Christian and an evolutionist, the consistent evolutionist could not have much Christianity left. Instead, Christians should seek to *follow Christ* in their beliefs about creation, because only insofar as our beliefs follow His can we properly be said to have a Christian worldview at all.

