



## What Christians Believe

### The Apostles Creed

#### (4) I Believe in God... Creator of Heaven and Earth

Genesis 1:1-31

May 24th 2020

#### (1) The Issue of Science

In spite of all the suffering of our present pandemic, I believe we are all glad to be living in the 21st Century rather than the past when other pandemics raged across the world.

And the simple reason is modern science.

When Plague hit London in 1665 people fled the city in crowds, on foot, on horseback, in carts, making the plague spread fast in the population and also taking it to the countryside because they didn't know that the plague was spread by rat fleas which could jump from rats to people and from person to person. If they had only known, they would have "social distanced" and saved many lives

How fortunate we are today! Whatever our frustrations at social distancing we know how Coronavirus spreads and so we can take precautions against it.

And all this knowledge, which is saving many lives today, is the fruit of science. I begin like this, because as we make our way through The Apostle's Creed, we've arrived at this line, "I believe in God... Creator of heaven and Earth." But I am aware that the moment we say "God created the universe" some people in western culture at least, will turn off and say, "But doesn't science teach us that the universe just happened by itself? Starting with the big bang, stars and galaxies and planets just formed, and then over billions of years life including humans just evolved on earth? God didn't create the universe, the universe just made itself"

And so right away we get stuck in disagreement and controversy!

And so, though we might want to move on to the helpful comfort that comes out of Creation—for example, that life has a purpose and a meaning—we've got to pause and say a few words about this apparent conflict between how the Bible starts "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" and how some scientists believe the universe came to be.

#### ***(1) This is a "success of science" issue***

The first thing to say to folk who doubt that God made the universe, is that this issue is the fruit of science's great success. Science and technology have given us wonderful medicine, mobile phones, blue tooth, global communications, and much else that immensely enriches our lives every day—we're all able to watch together online this morning. And that success has spawned the idea that scientists are always right in whatever they say. Scientists have become the new High Priests of western civilisation. Whenever there is a problem we turn to them for answers.

We reason, "If they have been so clever at developing cures and smart phones, they must right whatever they say." So when a scientist says "God did not create the universe or life" we feel we have no option but to believe him or her.

We must remember that when scientists speak about most things, we can trust them, science is wonderful, but when they put together enormous theories about the past which can't be tested and which allow human prejudice and philosophy in, theories that deeply affect who we are and where we came from, we are not obliged to take what they say on board, and have every right to question them.

Scientists are fallible human beings with all the prejudices and weaknesses we all have. If you don't believe that, read the story of the race to discover the secret of DNA - it's filled with selfish ambition and petty jealousies.

Not everything a scientist says is right, and I say that respectfully as someone who spent many years in the world of science myself.

## ***(2) Many scientists question the theory of evolution***

The second thing to say is that many great scientists question the big theory that says that everything in the universe, from stars to human beings just evolved by themselves without the involvement of a great Intelligent Designer.

I wish I was giving this talk next year, because in March 2021, Stephen Meyer's book, "The return of the God Hypothesis" is due to be published. In this book he will show all the evidence out there today is pointing more and more to the existence of great Intelligence behind the universe. And Stephen Meyer is not the only scientist who questions the idea that the universe "just came about by itself." Fred Hoyle, the great English astronomer said this after a life-time studying the universe:

*"A common-sense interpretation of the facts suggests that a super intellect has monkeyed with physics, as well as chemistry and biology, and that there are no blind forces worth speaking about in nature."*

## ***(3) .....there are many deep problems with "the universe just happened"***

Where did matter and energy in the universe come from in the first place? Where did the first living cell come from? A cell is far too complex to have evolved in the short amount of time the universe has been in existence. How did life burst from single-celled to multi-celled creatures in so short a time that the Cambrian explosion suggest it did? Where did human minds, human consciousness come from? We can reason and plan and dream, and concentrate on difficult sermons! Where did amazing minds come from?

When you make a cinnamon cake, if you don't put cinnamon in at the start you don't get cinnamon out at the end. And it's the same with the human mind. If you don't start with Mind you can't get mind out at the end.

There are many deep problems with the idea that "everything has just come about from nothing."

And the last thing I'd like to say about this matter before we move on, is we all need to put scepticism about God into global perspective:...

## ***(4) ...most people in the world are religious***

People who do not believe in a God, in a Creator, are in a tiny minority. 84% world's population are religious, and only about 16%, non-religious. Even in China, one of the most atheistic countries in the world, all sorts of religions are flourishing, and especially Christianity : There are now more Christians in China than there are members of the Chinese Communist Party, and the numbers are growing! (Because communism can't satisfy the desires of the human heart, but Jesus Christ can!)

## **Summary**

There is nothing out of date with this wonderful line of the Apostle's Creed: *"I believe in God... Creator of heaven and earth."*

## (2) What Christians believe about Creation

When we say “I believe in the God, Creator of heaven and earth,” this is what we mean:

### **(1) God made everything**

*Genesis 1:1, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”* God made the stars and galaxies, and those beautiful clouds of stellar dust which the Hubble telescope has revealed to our eyes. God made our beautiful world, with its sunsets and zebras, frogs and flowers. And God made you and I, male and female in his image and likeness

*All things bright and beautiful,  
all creatures great and small,  
all things wise and wonderful,  
the Lord God made them all.*

Hasn't it been a most beautiful spring? A cyclist said to me this week that he has noticed for the first time all the different hues of green in the spring-time trees; no two tree-greens are the same! God made EVERYTHING

### **(2) God created spirit and matter**

The second thing Christians mean is that God created both spirit and matter. There is more to this universe than the eye can see. There is more to you and me than arms and legs and eyes and ears. We have invisible souls or spirits - and there are invisible angels out there too— and God made these too.

*God “formed Adam from the dust of the ground (skin, bones, flesh) and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and the man became a living being.” (Genesis 2:7)*

God made things visible and things invisible.

A man who spent many years in a communist prison reflected on his past days of freedom, and he said why was it that when my body had everything it wanted, I was still unhappy and unsatisfied? And he came to the conclusion that it was because he had a soul as well as a body, a soul that could only be satisfied by God.

### **(3) God created everything out of nothing**

And thirdly, we believe that God created everything out of nothing.

The potter must start with clay he did not make, the artists must take pre-existing paint and canvas, the carpenter timber from the forest, but God makes things in a different way!

When he created the universe he created everything *from nothing*! He only had to speak “let there be” and it came into existence!

*“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)*

What an awesome God, who merely speaks a word, “Let there be light” “Let the waters teem with living creatures” and things come into existence in that instant which had no existence a moment before!

So Christians believe that (1) God made everything, (2) which includes invisible souls as well as visible things, and (3) that he created all of this from nothing!

But how does this Christian belief work its way into our daily lives? This is the important bit:

### (3) What it means for us

#### **(1) Creation tells us that there is a God**

If you walked across Worcester racecourse and came upon one of those old watches with their intricate movement inside, you would not say “that watch just happened by chance”, no, your mind would say, “a very complicated and beautiful device like this must have been made by a very skilled watchmaker.” And in exactly the same way when we see the wonderful world of flowers and trees and stars and galaxies, we naturally think “there must be a God.” Creation tells everyone that there is a Creator God.

Many years ago I got into an argument with a fellow student over the existence of God. I said to him, “You know God exists, from the wonder of the universe around you. I don’t need to prove it to you, you just know.” And he said “I don’t know God exists,” and I said “yes you do” and he said “No I don’t” and so it went on.

I’m older now! Though I didn’t say it in the right way, I was speaking the truth: everyone knows that God exists:

*“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 people are without excuse.” (Romans 1:20)*

The Bible goes further and says that when someone denies the existence of God, it’s never because of “scientific evidence” it’s always because they do not want to change their lives. If we say God created us, it follows that we are accountable to him, and should obey him, but what if he doesn’t approve of my lifestyle? I’ll have to change! I don’t want that! And so they suppress the truth!

The Bible says that on the day of judgement, no-one will be able to say to God, “I never knew you existed” for God will point to the flowers in their gardens, the blue sky above their heads, and the creatures in the fields as his witnesses!

#### **(2) Creation tells us what God is like**

When we look at what God has made we see what God is like. If say ten people made a clay pot, I think you’d be able to say something about them, from the pot they’d just made: this person is artistic, perhaps that one has a different gift, perhaps even this one lazy:

When we look at this universe we learn that, God must be powerful to create 100 billion galaxies. He must be very clever to because he runs the run the whole universe by mathematics.

On Wednesday evening, I looked up at the sky at 11:03 to see the International Space Station whizzing overhead, a bright star like object moving quickly across the sky. I called my family out (in their pyjamas!) It was awesome to think that three astronauts were whizzing over our head at 5 miles per second. How clever mankind is!

But how more intelligent is the God who made the team who made the space station, and made the stars we saw that night and wrote the laws they all obey!

God must be creative—Why are there 350,000 different kinds of beetle and perhaps 10 million different species of living things? Hwy not just 100, 1000? God is creative!

God must be good because he has made such a beautiful world for us to live in and enjoy, with seasons to break up the year, many varieties of food and drink, the sunshine, and many other gifts too!

Creation tells us that God is glorious and when we take a walk in the fresh spring countryside, or watch a sunflower seed germinate and grow, weren't meant to worship like this: *"O Lord our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth." (Psalm 8)* *"The heavens declare the glory of God, the skies proclaim the work of his hands." (Psalm 19)*

**(3) Creation tells us that there is meaning to life**

We are not freak accidents of chance and natural law, but we have been made by a personal God for a reason. And so....

**(4) ..creation invites us to get to know the Creator**

The apostle Paul was explaining to people how God made everything and how he has decided where everyone should live and when, and then he said this: *"God did (all of) this so that people would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us."* (Acts 17:27)

Creation says: You've heard the concert, would you like to meet the Composer? You've seen the painting, why not acquaint yourself with the Artist?

Creation invites us to know the Creator. But it doesn't say enough.

And that's why God sent his Son Jesus Christ into the world as a real human being, to complete the message begun through creation's voice! To tell us that God loves us and wants to restore us to himself.

And so 2000 years ago God sent his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, into this world to live our life, and die for our sins, so that we can be forgiven and know him once more. And he invites us to believe in his Son with the promise of new and eternal life: *"For God so loved the world, that he sent his only Son, so that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life."*