

# Doctrine of Creation

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[ 0 : 00 ] All right, so this is day two of our Doctrine of Creation course. We are going to start today by talking about, well, the plan for today is to talk about the days of creation, different views of the days of creation, what do we make of this amazing text that we found.

But before we get into that, I'd like to start by talking a little bit about speech, communication generally.

If we think about in academic jargon, in speech act theory, they divide communication into three parts.

You have locution, illocution, and perlocution. Okay? Locution is the form of the communication.

The grammar, the syntax, the context, that kind of thing. The illocution refers to the meaning that is meant to be conveyed by the communication.

[ 1 : 09 ] And the perlocution refers to what the audience actually receives from the communication. So before we get, actually, before we get started, do you have the time?

No. No? You don't have the time? No. Does anybody have the time? It's 9. 9. 9. 9. 10. 10. So when I ask, do you have the time, most of us are looking for our watch.

Right? We're looking for, well, nowadays, we're looking for our phone to try to figure out what the time is. Because when I ask, do you have the time, most people are not going to answer yes or no.

No, you did actually answer no. That's technically the correct answer. Right? If you take the actual form of the sentence and say, the correct answer to, do you have the time, is either what?

Yes or no. Right? If you take the literal meaning. But when I ask, do you have the time, you understand that what I'm asking really is, can you give me, can you tell me what time it is?

[ 2 : 17 ] Right? Does that make sense? So in this sense, the locution of the sentence is, do you have the time? Right? Or do you know the time? The illocution is, can you tell me what time it is?

Right? And the perlocution is hopefully, oh, I will get the time for you. Right? Responding to the meaning of what is meant to be conveyed. And then this can change, using the exact same phrase, I can change the illocution.

Right? Like, do you know what time it is? Oh, do you know what time it is? You know, oh, check your watch. And like, do you know what time it is? Right? Again, the correct answer from your kids is not, oh, no.

No, I don't know what time. You know? No, the correct answer is, I'm sorry. I'm up too late. I need to go to bed. Right? Or, do you know what time it is? And it's, you're like, yes, it's time for football.

Right? And so, what's important about the speech act theory here is that the illocution, the meaning that is meant to be conveyed, is in part based on the locution, the form of the sentence, but also surrounding context.

[ 3 : 29 ] Right? Other elements of embedded meaning that we pick up when we're doing communication. So, why am I talking about this? This is actually really important because of biblical inerrancy.

Right? We as Christians believe that the Bible is the word of God. And it's therefore inerrant, meaning it's without error. All the truth claims it affirms are true.

That's what the doctrine means. Right? And so, when we apply our principles of communication that I just talked about, that means that the illocution, the meaning that is meant to be conveyed by the text, is always true.

Okay? And so, when we, the goal then of our hermeneutics and exegesis then is to take our perlocution, the way that we're receiving the text, the way we understand it, and aligning it with the illocution, the way, the meaning that's meant to be conveyed by the text.

But, as anybody who's spent any time in the church knows, there's about 10 perlocutions, per locution, that is out there.

[ 4 : 47 ] Okay? For every text, there seems to be a good number of ways that the audience has received it. And so, this is definitely true. So, what, what, I guess my question is, why?

Right? Why? I mean, if the, if the locution is there, we're all reading the same text, you know, maybe in different translations, right? But, we're all reading the same locution. Why do we get different perlocutions?

Yeah? Perspective. Yeah. Maybe there's, yeah, maybe there's different perspectives. Maybe there's different philosophical presuppositions that we're bringing to the text that help explain why one person gets one perlocution and another person gets another.

Okay? Ultimately, we're all trying to do the same thing, which is get the correct meaning from the text. So, I submit to you that when it comes to reading Genesis 1, especially the days of creation, the biggest philosophical underpinning background that we're bringing to the text that is going to color the way we understand it is what I call one of the major tensions in biblical interpretation. And, that major tension is how do we balance general and special revelation? So, generally, when we talk about revelation, meaning God's self-expression, we, a lot, historically, we've broken that up into two major groups.

[ 6 : 23 ] Okay? Sometimes, it's described as two books. We have the book of nature, also called general revelation. It's called general revelation because the general public has access to it.

Everybody, in principle, has access to the book of nature, that revelation of God. And, it's properly understood as revelation of God, right? Because God creating ex nihilo could have created in multiple different ways.

Right? And, so, the creation that we have is actually a self-revelation of God. He has created it this way for a reason or has actually communicated himself in the creation.

So, that's general revelation. The other one, not the book of nature, but the book of scripture. The book of scripture. We know this one. Special revelation.

It's called special revelation because it has a smaller scope. Not everyone in the whole history of the world has received special revelation. We know from redemption history there was a small, you know, relatively small group of people who were directly communicated to by God.

[ 7 : 35 ] And, this is what we treasure as the Bible. So, when it comes to understanding nature, understanding the world, how do we balance general revelation, that communication of God that we get from nature, and special revelation?

Now, it might be easy just to say, well, look, special revelation, God's active speech in the Bible, boom, clear.

We just rely on that only. However, if we pay attention closely to what scripture says, scripture says for us to go out and see God in nature.

That God has revealed himself in nature. And so, if we take special revelation seriously, we also have to take general revelation seriously. That's the rub. So, now we're all sort of in this position of trying to balance what we learn from nature and what we learn from scripture, especially as it involves understanding the natural world.

So, I've sort of put together a rough spectrum of what I believe are sort of different buckets that we can put different people who have weighed general and special revelation differently.

[ 8 : 52 ] Okay? Okay? This first bucket, I'll, I call, and then, okay, so for the record, I'm going to use a lot of names here. I'm going to be naming a lot of things.

Wherever possible, I have used names that the people who support that view use. Okay? I'm not trying to label people.

Some of these names, you might think, sound derogatory. But, for the people who use the term for themselves, they do not mean it derogatorily, right? So, just as reference, try to, try to, like, let's try to remove all of our preconceived notions of this language just so we can come to understand this topic.

Again, not trying to, to color anybody's, anybody's reading. Okay? Except for the first one here.

I call them, the first one and the last one. You'll see. I'm equally harsh. So, the first one I call science skeptics. And the science skeptic is someone who takes special revelation here, and it's super weighty, and general revelation is really not doing anything.

[10:08] Okay? And this view, basically, is saying they don't believe science or studying nature at all is capable of giving reliable information about the world. Okay?

Okay? And so, they, they would say that special revelation is really the only way we can get any knowledge. Now, this is actually, isn't a very common view.

Okay? So, but there are people out there who, who would support this, say that we really can't trust anything we see other than what we read in Scripture. And the reason I don't think this is, I'm going to say I don't think this is a tenable view for us to hold as Christians, and for the reasons I said before.

It's kind of a, it could be a circular problem. Because if you say, special revelation is my only authority, that's the only thing I trust, I can't trust anything I see with my eyes, then you're going to have to deal with those passages of Scripture that tell you that you must look out on creation and learn things.

That we're expected to know things about God from creation. Right? I just think, I always think of Genesis 1. I mean, Genesis 1, Romans 1.

[11:24] Right? Right? God's eternal attributes, namely His divine power, is clearly seen through nature. Right? So we are expected to be able to learn things about God from nature, and special revelation says so.

So I don't think science skeptics, or this posture of being super flippant about anything in nature, is something that really we can hold. But this is a view, I want to highlight, this is a view, this is a way of balancing it.

Basically not balancing it all. General revelation is not even on the scale. Another view we can look at I call concordists, or they call themselves concordists.

Concordists take special revelation and general revelation, and they weigh it sort of like this. Where special revelation is the driver's seat, but general revelation is bringing something to the table in terms of what we can learn about the world.

Okay? Basically, if you imagine, the Bible sets the table. The Bible is saying, this is what we see in nature. And then the concordists would then look at the world and say, I need to take this information I'm getting from the world and fit it in to this table that's set by Scripture.

[12:39] So they would emphasize special revelation, but they also have a high view of general revelation. And in general, these Christians that believe that the Bible is intending to communicate scientific information at some level, and therefore it's our job to fit what we learn from nature into this biblical framework.

Okay. Concordists. Boom. Right smack dab in the middle, we have what I call the harmonists. Again, not all of these terms are my terms. But a harmonist, and a harmonist would say they believe that science and Scripture interpretation done correctly will produce a coherent worldview. Saying stuff like, all truth is God's truth. Right? Anything we learn correctly from nature and anything we learn correctly from Scripture are going to harmonize.

Right? This is why we call them harmonists. So they, in this view, they don't really privilege special or general revelation when it comes to looking out at nature. Now, I want to be clear, every Orthodox Christian believes that special revelation is the highest authority.

But we're talking specifically about how we understand the natural world. Right? And in understanding the natural world, a harmonist would say, we take the observational data that we have, and we take the scriptural data that we have, and we take them on their own terms.

[14:10] And then, if there's any apparent conflict there, we try to smooth those over. Either by re-appropriate, re-understanding our interpretation of science, or re-interpreting Scripture, whichever one is more appropriate given the apparent conflict.

That's the harmonists. Next, as you might imagine, the scale tips this way. We call these accommodationists.

Accommodationists say that Scripture interpretation done correctly will fit into the scientific consensus in detail. So this is sort of the flip side of the concordance, where accommodationists would say, scientific knowledge is really setting the table.

It's really setting the parameters. And when we correctly understand Scripture, it should fit in to what we see in the scientific data. Okay?

They'll often de-emphasize the scientific information expressed in Scripture, and focus more on sort of the spiritual and moral import of the Bible.

[15:12] Does that make sense? Okay. And then now we're going to do the last group, which is general revelation way down here, super way down, and special revelations up there, not really doing much of anything.

I call these biblical skeptics. They don't believe that Scripture is capable of providing reliable information about the world at all. Basically, the Bible is only there to convey moral truths, and shouldn't really be relied on to convey anything what we would call scientific information at all. Okay? That general revelation, science, observation, whatever, those are really the only reliable ways to get information. That's about the natural world.

Okay? And equally, I don't think this is something that we can hold as Orthodox Christians. Okay? I don't really think the Bible will accept this parameter of saying, yes, I'm only here to give you moral truths.

It sounds a lot like I'm giving you history sometimes. It sounds a lot like I'm trying to tell you something that actually happened. But, you know, don't worry about that. Like, no, no, no.

[16:23] I don't think Scripture is going to, and I think we should accept Scripture being demoted into that level. Okay? I think we should allow Scripture to speak on the areas that it speaks on.

Right? And so, equally, I think a biblical skeptic, a scientific skeptic, these two poles are things we want to avoid. So we're all, I think most of us as Orthodox Christians find ourselves somewhere in between.

Somewhere in between. And you can take any of these different categories that I've made, and you can find a spectrum within the spectrum. And so it all gets very complicated.

But you can imagine, as a accommodationist or a concordist come to the text of Genesis 1, they may be expecting to see different things.

They may be asking different questions of the text, and therefore getting different answers. Does that make sense? So I think this is the philosophical background that all of us are bringing to our reading of Genesis.

[17:31] And I think this is mostly the biggest driver of the different perlocutions that we bring to the same text. Okay? All right.

With that being said, why don't we actually go to the text? Anybody have their Bible open? We're just going to read all of Genesis 1 to 2-3.

Who feels confident enough to read a large portion of Scripture? Richard, you want to go? Go for it. In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

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. And God said, let there be light.

And there was light. God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. God called the light day, and the darkness he called night.

[18:45] And there was evening, and there was morning, the first day. And God said, let there be a vault between the waters to separate water from water.

So God made the vault and separated the water under the vault from the water above it. And it was so. God called the vault sky.

And there was evening, and there was morning, the second day. And God said, let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear.

And it was so. God called the dry ground land, and the gathered waters he called seas. And God saw that it was good.

Then God said, let the land produce vegetation, seed-bearing plants and trees, on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds.

[19:50] And it was so. The land produced vegetation, plants bearing seed according to their kinds, and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds.

And God saw that it was good. And there was evening, and there was morning, the third day. And God said, let there be lights in the vault of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark sacred times and days and years, and let them be lights in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth.

And it was so. And God made two great lights, the greater light to govern the day, and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars.

God set them in the vault of the sky to give light on earth, to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good.

And there was evening, and there was morning, the fourth day. And God said, let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the vault of the sky.

[ 21 : 23 ] So God created the great creatures of the sea, and every living thing with which the water teems, and that moves about in it according to their kinds.

And every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. God blessed them and said, be fruitful and increase in number, and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth.

And there was evening, and there was morning, the fifth day. And God said, let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds, the livestock, the creatures that move along the ground, and the wild animals, each according to its kind.

And it was so. God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds.

And God saw that it was good. Then God said, let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea, and the birds in the sky, over the livestock, and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.

[ 23 : 01 ] So God created mankind in his own image. In the image of God he created them, 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 in the sea, and the birds in the sky, and over every living creature that moves on the ground.

Then God said, I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth, and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food.

And to all the beasts of the earth, and all the birds in the sky, and all the creatures that move along the ground, everything that has the breath of life in it, I give every green plant for food.

And it was so. God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning, the sixth day.

[ 24 : 11 ] Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. By the seventh day, God had finished the work he had been doing. So on the seventh day, he rested from all his work.

Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy. Because on it, he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

All right. Wow. There's something special about reading Scripture when it's snowing outside. I don't know. Isn't that just beautiful?

It never gets old. But let's step back. Let's zoom out a little bit and get kind of a bird's eye view of this whole creation account that we have.

As you can see, there's sort of a pattern, a lot of Christians over time have seen sort of a pattern in the creation days. You have two sets of three. You have a set of forming, forming spaces, and then you have a set of filling, the filling of those spaces.

[ 25 : 21 ] So you can imagine, day one, we have the creation of light and dark, and in day four, we have the creation of the luminaries. Those things that are going to be shining in the light and the dark.

We're creating, we're shining, basically, with the light and the dark. Day two, we have the separation of the water from the sky. Day five, we have the creation of sea creatures and flying creatures.

Right? Day three, we have the creation of the land, and then a special creation event of vegetation on the land. Day six, we have the creation of the land animals, and a special creation event of human beings.

Each one of these six days ends with the same phrase, and there was evening, and there was morning, X day. Technically, there is no definite article.

Right? So we say the first day, but it's technically like first day. Day one. Day two. A lot of, a lot, some people make a big deal out of that. I'm, take it for what you will.

[ 26 : 30 ] But, day seven does not have that phrase. Day seven is a special day. Day seven is where God rests from all his creation. It has no parallel in the forming or in the filling.

It's its own thing. It's the capstone, and there is no evening, and there is no morning. Everything is very good. Good, good, good, good, good, very good. Very good.

That's the, that's the data. So, there it is. That's the low, that's the locution, everybody. We all have the same thing. We're all working off of the same thing, and we are, hopefully, we're all working and striving together to get at the correct illocution.

What are we supposed to be receiving in this text? Okay? But, there are quite a few different per locutions, and you can imagine if we take our philosophical predispositions in mind, those different ways of weighing general and special revelation, you can imagine we come to this text with different questions.

So, if we imagine we have a very heavy view of special revelation in terms of what it's supposed to explain about nature, we might be asking questions of like, how did God create?

[ 27 : 43 ] In what manner? What was the mechanism by which God created things? And, expecting to receive that information in the text. Whereas, maybe if you go the other direction, weighing general revelation more, and special revelation at a different level, you might be saying, okay, what is it that the Bible is trying to convey in its own context to us?

Were the original audience asking those kinds of questions? Were they asking questions of like, how exactly did God create? So, what are the different views?

Well, luckily for us, there's only like 17. 17. No, I'm joking. There's not 17. By my count, there is only 12.

So, we're going to go through these. You know, I have taught this class before, a few years back, and I had, basically I had an overview of all the modern views of Genesis 1.

and I spread them out and I was very, still, I'm going to present those today too. So, I haven't given up on those. But I've been really interested in church history and I've been wanting to, so I wanted to go through the ones I had made before and I wanted to slot in different examples of church fathers who held the different views.

[ 29 : 07 ] And, as it turns out, I failed spectacularly because, as is often the case, the patristic views are very different than the ones we have today.

They're harder to categorize in the way, in the common understandings we have in today. So, I decided to make a whole new section starting just with what I call the patristic views of early Genesis.

And they generally fall into three different categories. The first one is the world weak hypothesis. World weak. So, what this view holds is that the creation account is actually a prophecy, a forward-looking prophecy of six eras of human history.

Six, each one of the days is a thousand years. The understanding here is that with the Lord, a thousand years is like a day and a day is like a thousand years.

And the patristics are like, well, good. It says here, day, therefore a thousand years. Right? Equals. And so, they said, oh, there's six thousand years of human history being prophesied in this early interpretation.

[ 30 : 27 ] With the seventh day representing the eschatological millennium of Jesus. Of Jesus' reign on earth as we see in Revelation. The millennium, the millennial reign.

And then some fathers actually talking about the future eighth day, which is the recreation of the heavens and the earth. Right? As far as I know, there is no one today who holds this view.

Okay? But this was actually a really, really common popular view in the early church. People like, yeah. Richard? This view is a lot more popular than you might suspect.

Even today. Even today. All right. All right. I'm willing to be wrong about this. You can easily go to YouTube or the internet in general and you can find this view espoused by living, breathing human beings.

Wow. Well, there you go. I mean, look, I was actually going to point out that as often as strange as this view sounds, this has actually had a long shelf life.

[ 31 : 34 ] church fathers like Irenaeus, Hippolytus, Cyprian, John of Damascus, and Bede all held some version of this view. And through people like John of Damascus and Bede, this continued on through the Middle Ages where even people like Anselm and Thomas of Aquinas, they would reference people holding this view.

Okay? So, one patristic view is the world weak hypothesis. Another view, which is a little bit more maybe familiar to some of us, is what I will call Alexandrian allegory.

Alexandrian allegory is the view of a lot of church fathers in North Africa who believed that based on what they understood about the natural world and based on interesting facts, interesting facets of

the Genesis narrative itself, believed that actually God created instantaneously.

Everything. All at once. Boom. Okay? There was no time, there was no sequence in reality in the actual act of creation and that the creation narrative we get here is either an allegory talking about moral and spiritual truths or the different natures of the created world or it's an accommodation to human understanding being where it's really hard for us to understand God creating everything in an instant.

So, for instance, church fathers like Clement and Origen and Athanasius all held something like this instantaneous creation with an allegorical understanding of Genesis 1.

[ 33 : 23 ] Famously, Augustine held this view to a certain extent and he believed that actually the days of creation were not days of God creating the physical world were actually were days were moments by which the angelic host were being exposed to what was about to happen in creation.

Right? Have anybody ever read the Silmarillion? Anybody ever read the Silmarillion? Well, okay, two people. So, it's hard to get through, but if you started the Silmarillion you probably read this part because it's literally the first two pages.

in the Silmarillion you have this is the deep cut of J.R. Tolkien his creation myth of his Middle Earth. And Iluvatar is singing this is the God this is the one God of the Middle Earth he's singing a song and his different angelic hosts are harmonizing with him and Melkor the devil character he's doing disharmony and Iluvatar keeps on bringing his disharmony back into harmony and Melkor is like ah man you know and then boom it's done and what Iluvatar does is he shows the angels like what you just sang is the story of this world is the story of this world and he's showing them human history or the history of Middle Earth right and I think this is Tolkien hearkening back to this view of Augustine that in creation God is sorry I should say then Iluvatar just goes boom there it is the world is created right and then those angelic hosts can enter the creation it gets very confusing after that but I think this is hearkening back to that where

God is presaging what is about to occur to the angelic host and then the actual act of creation is instantaneous so that's Alexandrian allegory we have another view called Cappadocian literalism this is closer to what we are familiar with today these fathers centered around Antioch took a more straightforward reading of the text they said that basically it is what it is these are 24 hour days right however this is different than modern views of 24 hour day because they believed that this creation as we receive it now is the creation that God made in those 24 hour days so including predation including animal death all of these things are facets of God's good creation which distinguishes it from modern creation views of 24 hour days and they also engage in a lot of allegory in those first chapters too so they wouldn't have taken everything as straight journalistic history but it was closer to some of the more common views today so those are the patristic views now actually as time went on in the west there was an attempt to merge these two views together you had the idea of instantaneous creation followed by a sequence of forming that kind of emerged and if you think about it we all sort of hold something like this view today right we all believe that at some point [ 36 : 48 ] God created everything and we all believe in some sort of sequence of forming of the natural world whether we believe that the sequence of forming is 24 hour literal days solar days of the forming and special creation of every single thing or we believe in some sort of development we all sort of in the west believe in this kind of sequence instantaneous sequence!

proponents of this Cappadocian view would be Basil of Caesarea famously he has this book called the Hexameron which is an interpretation of the six days of creation Gregory of Nyssa and Gregory of Nazianzus okay that's the patristic views let's jump into the modern views we have young earth creationism I'm sure a lot of us are familiar with this this is basically taking Genesis as a face face value literal journalistic history of what's going on and it's meant to be understood as 24 hour solar days that creation is occurring I'm sure a lot of us are familiar with this view they also believe a facet of young creationism is they believe that science done correctly will reveal that the earth and the universe are actually 6,000 to 10,000 years old right and they get that number 6,000 to 10,000 by taking the

Genesis narrative right Adam was born in the sixth day and then we have a genealogy of Adam later in Genesis a genealogy of Adam's descendants how long they lived etc and actually a man named Usher I'm forgetting his first name James James Usher that's right he was the first one in church history to really line all of these genealogies up I think this was in the 16th century line all these genealogies up and count out the time and he got to a number like 6,000 to 10,000 depending on how you interpret the genealogies so that's young earth creationism there's another

little basket of views that I like to call ancient science interpretations okay what hold these views together is that they all share a common belief that the Genesis account is intending to convey not just what God did but how he created and that understanding it correctly these understanding the Genesis narrative correctly it will fit with modern science okay so one of these views is the appearance of age view where it's basically the same as young earth creationism except they don't believe that science done correctly will show that the earth is young they believe that the earth was created in 24 hour solar days but it was created mature much like we believe Adam was created fully formed the earth and the universe were created fully formed so it has the appearance of age but not actually a long period of time so they would believe if you go out scientifically and look at rocks they're going to look really old but in fact they actually are not that old okay so that is closer to young earth creationism where they're saying we can explain the appearance of age here based on this understanding of science but they would say now with that in mind you can actually see that it's really young yeah age yeah yeah so the appearance of age and young earth creationism kind of there's a little bit of melding in between there where they can go back and forth another one of these ancient science interpretations is the gap theory so this believes that the days of creation are 24 hours solar days but between Genesis 1:1 and 2 and Genesis 1:3 we have a long we have eons of history that occur right God created the universe and then actually was the fall of Satan and the angels that brought the earth into formlessness and voidness thereby God recreating the world in six 24 hour solar days in the way that we experience it now and so any earlier age of you know any dinosaurs or anything like that that we find is evidence of this earlier eons of history or even age of the universe of the earth this is all contained in that gap so this was actually a pretty popular view in the early 20th century it's kind of gone out of favor because a lot of there's a lot of grammatical arguments against it that there really isn't a gap understood in the text but that was a very common view and there are people who still defend it today and then the last of our ancient science interpretations is the day age theory so the

[42:07] Genesis account is describing how God created but they understand the word day not to mean 24 hour solar day but to mean day in the more generic term like in the day of the Lord right in the day of the Lord is not 24 hour period right it's just this period of time and they would say okay we can understand the word day to mean a period of time and so each one of the creation days is a long age but the account of what goes on in that age is basically how it's described so that is sort of a very common view of old earth creationism okay alright those are the ancient science interpretations those ones are trying to take the biblical text on how they take the biblical text and learn how creation happened and there's different ways of fitting that with modern science we now have creation poem interpretations these say that what brings these together is that there are they would believe that there are figures of speech literary conventions in the text and that the text is not trying to explain to us how

God created as much as what God did when he created and why okay so views like this views under this category would be stuff like the analogical day theory this view says that the Bible is actually using analogical language to describe God's creative activity as if he was a craftsman in his regular work week right the crowd you know God the craftsman wakes up day one he works evening and morning day two he works evening and morning and then day seven is his sabbath rest right so just kind of like the the regular work week of a person so it's using an analogy so the days in this situation would be 24 hour solar days but they're not meant to be taken literally they're meant to be taken as an analogy of God's activity the framework view is another one of these creation poem interpretations they see that forming and filling pattern that we see in Genesis 1 and then we say oh this framework then is indicating to us there's a disc chronology here we're not supposed to be meant to be taking these days sequence literally and so that gives them a lot of play in how

God created they're saying this is telling us what but the sequence isn't meant to be taken as a history it's meant to be taken as a poem or a literary convention that's supposed to be conveying what God did but not exactly how he did it finally we have our religion only interpretations these views they're connected by the belief that the Genesis narrative is not meant to be understood what God's creating or what God did in creation or even how not how not even what but just who created and why so you're not really meant to take any knowledge about the natural world from this first chapter you're meant to learn about God and so they'll point to for instance in the proclamation day

view they'll say that this is God's proclamation of his creative act in the throne room this is him describing how you know a view of creation but in reality it happened in a completely different way right sort of

God saying this sort of like Augustine's view in a way this is what is going to happen and then creation happens but not in that way okay yeah kind of like a decree another one is the kingdom temple view where it says this isn't describing God's creation at all it's describing God's naming of the creation and their purposes and functions right I'm separating light from darkness light is going to be called light darkness to be called dark the luminaries are going to be meant for signs and seasons animals this is your role fish this is your role you see how that we understand in the ancient naming is understood as an act of authority and so here in this view God is inaugurating his kingdom his temple of creation by naming everything and putting everything where it should be okay and then finally we have the alternative cosmology view this view says the Moses is actually borrowing elements from contemporary ancient near eastern creation accounts to show the differences of the

God of the Bible and why God created so instead of thinking about the what and the how of God creating we're supposed to be looking at how God has no equal God is not in conflict with anybody God is God is creating humans with dignity everything is good those kinds of things right okay that was a lot right that was a lot lot of different perlocutions with the same locution right so what do we do here what do we make of this you can imagine if you come to the view you come to the text with a more of a concordist way of thinking about what the scripture is meant to be conveying you would expect to take maybe more one of these a young earth creationist or maybe an ancient science interpretation where we're trying to glean from the text what it is God actually did in creation right his method his mechanism as opposed to maybe if you take an accommodationist view maybe the kingdom temple view or the alternative cosmology view would make more sense to you because you wouldn't really be looking for

[ 48 : 08 ] Genesis 1 to be giving you that how and what information does that make sense yeah the problem is that if you take any of those views you just mentioned and you try to make it dogma I believe what Herman Bobbing said the days of creation were God's working days I wasn't there I can imagine all kinds of scenarios or this or that was happening but I wasn't there yeah and it's really not salvific knowledge it's just telling me that God is the creator and I'm this creature and it's not really salvific I shouldn't make it dogma I actually was going to mention Herman Bobbing because I really no it's great Herman Bobbing I think came to a really wise conclusion which is to say we read the text these are working days what does that mean different

Christians are going to disagree we can all agree on that God is the creator that God created for these reasons sort of sort of the common denominator of all these different views is God being creator creation being good it being made without conflict etc right but there is I think room for humility and charity here okay really really smart people over the whole history of the Christian tradition have disagreed on this okay Thomas Aquinas held a sort of similar view to Herman Bavinck B.B. Warfield was a gap theorist okay there were a lot of old earth creationists in the fundamentals book at the start of the fundamentalist movement there are a lot of wise and virtuous young earth creationists out there so I think we want to come to this with charity so like for instance I take my philosophical disposition is I tend to be kind of a harmonist okay

I and of course I make the spectrum and of course my view is in the middle of the spectrum of course right but yeah I tend to come at this in a way where I say okay I'm going to look at the world general revelation on its terms and I'm going to look at special revelation God's word on its terms and I want to understand what is it that God meant me to understand in this text what was it that the original audience was meant to get from this right and where I find tension I try to work that out okay and so for me what view of the days of creation is compelling I find the analogical day theory to be pretty compelling describing God's creative act what God did but in ways in the sense of an analogy just like a workman went out and created this is God's work week okay and it's going to be different than our work week but we can understand that God is the one who created yeah before the luminaries and then he created the sun on day four after the plants yeah so so this is not so if you might if you look back into the church into church history you might be wondering why did Augustine and Athanasius and Origen take this allegorical view of instantaneous creation and it's these exact questions there's nothing new under the sun the ancient church also looked at it and said man light is before the sun that doesn't make any sense but why would God turn on the light

and then turn off the light on and off for evening and morning when there isn't a sun when we understand the morning to be the rising of the sun so you see they all had the exact same questions we have and different people are going to be able to explain those in different ways so I'm not trying to say there's only one answer but the same issues why does day seven not have an evening and a morning why is day two creation event starting with there was no plant in the field and human beings are being created but plants were made on day three and this is day six so for these reasons textual reasons different people over time have taken different views but ultimately I'm not here to say you should take my view if you want to learn more about my view you can read see John Collins book reading Genesis well if you want to learn about day age you can read Hugh Ross's books if you want to learn about the patristic views you have the early Christian readings of Genesis 1 there's a lot of great books out there lost world of Genesis 1 by John Walton that will give you the kingdom temple view and so for answers in Genesis if you want to learn about young creationism there you go Meredith Kline there's a lot of great research out there to learn but I hope we can come to this with a sense of humility understanding that we're in a great company of people who all disagreed with each other and are just trying to do justice as they see it to the creation narrative right okay yeah any questions I'm done so questions question time justice lay it on me [ 53 : 54 ] I have a couple questions I'm curious when you think about kind of the epistemology behind what you do in science and how you approach scripture looking at the world scientifically we know the scientific model has certainty attached to it right yeah when we read scripture it seems like there is uncertainty there too I mean you see Jesus' disciples are uncertain about a lot of things you know Job and other prophets but then on the other hand you have people like Luke saying you know I'm like you're the theophilus this is so that you can have certainty about the things that you've been taught so I'm wondering how do you think about certainty versus uncertainty you look at general revelation through different lens than you look at scripture or do you find that they're more similar than that so I tend to have a very low view of the ability of human beings to gain certainty my this has been driven to me by being a scientist okay we have this popular view of science those are the people who know things but for all those of us who are scientifically trained we know that basically what we learn is how often we're all wrong about everything and how many different ways there is to explain different phenomenon and so a lot of times we come to things with sort of like you said a particular model in mind sort of a hypothetical model hypothesis about what is going on and we take the information we get and we test it against it and we try to see if it fits or doesn't fit but a lot of times it doesn't fit and it doesn't mean we toss out the model sometimes it doesn't fit and we're just like this is strange right and I think this is also true of scripture

I mean I think when it comes to certainty there are some things that are very clear and certain in scripture right the resurrection of Jesus like there's no ambiguity about that right the historicity of the apostle Paul like these are things that we're not really arguing about but there is in prophecy in a lot of the ancient narratives there are things that they just don't give us all the information it's kind of known that the Hebraic Bible gives you sort of just blow by blow action a lot of times and doesn't really give you a lot of detail like what was this person thinking am I meant to understand this as being a good act or a bad act right is God telling me that this is something I should model or is this something I shouldn't model and a lot of times wisdom is found in we as the collective church and collective interpreters working through these issues together with the aid of history and other elements biblical understanding biblical languages etc we can work on these to gain a better grasp of certainty but I think we need to have an open hand on those things that there is widespread disagreement on where we all understand this is hard we don't really know exactly how to understand this and those things we need to have a closed fist maybe that sounds bad but a firm grasp on those things that are clear to everybody those things that are nice in orthodoxy those things that we can describe in creeds and confessions that are the essentials of the faith as Raul would say that have salvific import right but for these other things I think we can take a more humility humble approach alright that's it guys we gotta get downstairs to worship I hope that we eventually get the idea that we can love and worship God from these days whatever they mean thanks guys thanks so much