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IN THE BEGINNING

by Thomas White

Thomas White stands in Blacktail Canyon, part of the Grand Canyon. He joined Answers in Genesis and Canyon Ministries on their Christian Leaders Trip in summer 2016. (Photo by John Whitmore)

Genesis 1:27: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."

Perhaps no other verse in the Bible does more to establish the foundation of a biblical worldview than Genesis 1:27. Of course, the pinnacle of this worldview and the story of the Bible centers on the atoning work of Christ's substitutionary death on the cross for our sake and in our place. But, the foundation of understanding a biblical worldview begins with creation.

Think about the worldview implications of the fact that God created. Evolutionary theories and the religion of secular humanism that pervade secular higher education would have you believe, through a process of natural selection over billions of years, that we are cosmic accidents. Yet Genesis 1:27 states three times, with poetic elegance, that "God created." One might imagine that an infinitely powerful God, who exists outside of time, omnisciently knew that His existence as the Creator would be challenged. To confront that challenge, God leaves no doubt with a repetitive refrain of "God created."

The fact that God created the heavens and the earth means that our very lives are a stewardship. We must one day stand before our Creator and give an account of how we have spent the gift of life we have been given. A worldview based on the Creator means that life has purpose and meaning beyond random chance. Psalm 139 tells us that God knew every one of our days before any of them existed. We must not live this life merely as the sum total of our existence, but rather involve

ourselves in His majestic eternal plan. Ultimately, God created us for an eternal relationship with Him.

This God who created us made us in His image, a fact repeated twice in Genesis 1:27. In the New Testament, these words come back to us when Jesus is approached about rendering taxes unto Caesar. He responds by asking whose image is on the coin and tells the audience to render unto Caesar the things that are his and unto God the things that are God's (Mark 12:17). Jesus implies that image means ownership. A coin with Caesar's image meant the coin belonged to Caesar. Man and woman created in the image of God implies that God has ownership over our lives and will one day justly pass eternal judgment upon us.

Being created in the image of God also brings meaning to the entirety of life — from the moment of conception until natural death. As image bearers of the Creator, the physically or mentally challenged have value. Those that society may cast aside have eternal worth. Christ died for the autistic and the least fortunate just as much as He did for you and me. Knowing that we are created in God's image, and considering the unfathomable depths of His love for us, we despise racism in any form, recognizing that one race flows from Adam's and Noah's veins, and through the blood of Jesus, believers are brothers and sisters in Christ no matter our ethnicity. We recognize that our Savior Himself was, in the eyes of man, an unplanned pregnancy who was

once a refugee fleeing to Egypt. Altogether, a worldview anchored in creation can handle some of the world's most difficult conversations with truth, grace, and peace through the hope of the Gospel.

We understand from Genesis that Adam sinned as our representative and that every human since that time, except the God-Man, Jesus, has followed the first man in sinful disobedience as a traitor against the King of the universe. In our sinful rebellion, we declare war upon our Creator and pledge allegiance to our own will. Our hostile action demands His judgment, but instead we receive a reconciliation provided by Jesus Christ and His death on the cross to all who repent and believe in Him.

Our worldview begins with a Creator, recognizing sin nature in all humans that contradicts a secular humanistic worldview. We must not embrace how we feel, because we know that our sin nature causes us to desire sinful actions that continue our rebellion against King Jesus. We cannot trust our hearts because the Bible tells us the heart is deceitfully wicked, who can understand it (Jer. 17:9)?

Further, Genesis 1:27 tells us that God created us male and female. In His infinite wisdom, God put man to sleep and, instead of making an identical partner, God chose to make a woman. The relationship between male and female beautifully points to something in the Godhead and reflects our need for community. This beautiful picture of love, further developed in Ephesians, depicts the very love that Christ demonstrated by laying down His life for the church.

The war of ideas currently taking place in our culture begins at creation. If someone believes that mankind resulted from evolution, then embracing his or her inner nature is being true to themselves because this life is all we have. One can easily see how sexual expression becomes the very essence of humanity and how denial of those feelings betrays someone's identity. Yet if you believe that God created us for more than this life, and that our identity must be found in Christ alone, then religious expression becomes more important than sexual expression. Sexuality is then a good gift from God, but not our defining distinctive. The Christian worldview notes that Jesus, the perfect God-Man, was not sexually active and that in heaven, we will not marry, but we will be like the angels (Matt. 22:30). Sexuality does not define humanity. Our identity, and our satisfaction, must be found in Christ alone.

Why is a biblical worldview of creation so important? How you view creation shapes how you view and live life itself.

At Cedarville University, we believe in a six-day literal creation. We believe in a historic Adam and Eve. We believe that mankind has a sin nature and is fallen. This affects how we teach political science, recognizing our sinfulness demands a system of checks

and balances. This affects how we teach psychology, understanding that man is not innately good, but that he possesses a sin nature and our greatest need is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This affects how we teach science, with a creationist perspective and belief in a global flood. This affects how we teach biology, which points to a gloriously wise Creator rather than an evolution of cells.

The foundation of the Christian worldview depends upon the strong foundation of creation. In

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this magazine, you will read articles that defend our position on creation from different angles and articles that describe in greater detail why this issue is central for Cedarville University.


You'll hear from Ken Ham, President and CEO of Answers in Genesis, who will defend why it's vital for institutions of Christian higher education — like Cedarville — to adhere to a literal six-day creation. You'll hear from John Whitmore, Cedarville Professor of Geology and co-author of the first young-earth creationist science textbook, who will reveal how the rock layers in the Grand Canyon support Noah's flood. You'll hear from Cedarville alumna Georgia (Hickman) Purdom '94, who will explain how genetic mutations, rather than being a solid basis for evolutionary theory, are a dead end. You'll hear from Thomas Mach '88, Professor of History and Assistant Vice President for Academics, who will survey the way biblical creation is woven through the curriculum of four academic disciplines at Cedarville. And lastly, Greg Couser, Senior Professor of Bible and Greek, explains the importance of biblical creation on sexuality and sexual identity.


In this issue, you'll discover how Cedarville continues to hold the Scriptures as the foundation for all we do. Because, as always, what we do is for the Word of God and the Testimony of Jesus Christ.

Thomas White became Cedarville's 10th President in 2013. He earned his Ph.D. in systematic theology from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is the author and editor of numerous publications, including the recently released *First Freedom: The Beginning and End of Religious Freedom* (B&H Academic).

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