

The Theology of the Westminster Standards WCF 4.1 – Of Creation (Part 1)

“For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm.” – Psalm 33:9

I. Review: WCF Chapters 1–3

A. Chapter 1 – *Of the Holy Scripture*

1. **Heb 1:1–2** – *“Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets,² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things ...”*

“The first chapter of the Confession ranks as the most thorough statement of classic Reformed Protestantism on the subject of Scripture and possibly the finest to date from any source.”

– Robert Letham, *The Westminster Assembly*, 120.

B. Chapter 2 – *Of God, and of the Holy Trinity*

1. Who God is, in and of Himself – infinite, eternal, and unchangeable (i.e., “self-contained fullness”).
2. How God relates to creation – manifesting His glory in sovereign dominion through covenants.
 - a. **Ps 155:3** – *“Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases.”*
 - b. **Prov 16:33** – *“The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the Lord.”*
 - c. **Matt 10:29** – *“Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father.”*

3. God is Trinity: One God in Three Persons (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit).

C. Chapter 3 – *Of God’s Eternal Decree*

1. God’s absolute, comprehensive, and unchanging decree or plan.
 - a. **Acts 2:23** – *“... this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed ...”*
2. God’s absolute, particular, and unchanging decree of predestination.
 - a. **2 Thess 2:13** – *“... because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth ...”*

“History has meaning just because God’s counsel is back of it.” – Cornelius Van Til

II. WCF Chapter 4.1 – On Creation

It pleased God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for the manifestation of the glory of his eternal power, wisdom, and goodness, in the beginning, to create, or make of nothing, the world, and all things therein whether visible or invisible, in the space of six days; and all very good. – WCF 4.1

- A. Who is the Author of creation?

1. **Heb 1:2** – “*God ... has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.*” [God the Father]
2. **John 1:3** – “*All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.*” [God the Son]
3. **Gen 1:3** – “*And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.*” [God the Holy Spirit]

“The Trinity reveals God to us as the fullness of being, the true life, eternal beauty. In God, too, there is unity in diversity, diversity in unity. Indeed, this order and this harmony is present in him absolutely. In the case of creatures we see only a faint analogy of it.” – Herman Bavinck

- B. What is creation for?
- C. “When” did God create?

“And if the sacred and infallible Scriptures say that in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, in order that it may be understood that He had made nothing previously,—for if He had made anything before the rest, this thing would rather be said to have been made ‘in the beginning,’—then assuredly the world was made, not in time, but simultaneously with time.” – Augustine of Hippo, City of God, 11.6

- D. How did God create?

1. **Mark 4:39** – “*And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, ‘Peace! Be still!’*”
2. **John 11:43** – “*When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, ‘Lazarus, come out.’*”

III. So What? (“So *WHAT?*!”)

- A. **Heb 11:3** – “*By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.*”
1. Stephen Hawking, *The Grand Design*: “*Because there is a law such as gravity, the universe can and will create itself from nothing ... Spontaneous creation is the reason there is something rather than nothing, why the universe exists, why we exist.*”
 2. Bertrand Russell, *Why I am Not a Christian*: “*That man is the product of causes which had no prevision of the end they were achieving; that his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and beliefs are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms...all these things, if not quite beyond dispute, are yet so nearly certain, that no philosophy which rejects them can hope to stand. Only within the scaffolding of these truths, only on the firm foundation of unyielding despair, can the soul’s habitation henceforth be safely built.*”
- B. **Ps 92:5** – “*How great are your works, O Lord! Your thoughts are very deep!*” (Ps 92:5)
- C. **Ps 104:24** – “*O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom have you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.*”
- D. **Ps 33:5–6** – “*He loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of the steadfast love of the Lord.*”