

Study 2. We love the earth (doctrine of creation)

Big idea: God created and sustains a beautiful and good world, and it is only right for us to be thankful for it and respectful of it.

Can you think of a time when you've experienced awe at the beauty and wisdom of creation?

In this study we will not be looking at Genesis 1-2, as these wonderful chapters are already covered in the "Previously on planet earth" overview of the Bible available at mountainstreet.media/library/previously-on-planet-earth

Observation and interpretation

Read Psalm 33 (especially verses 6-9)

- From this passage, how did the Lord God create the world?
- What should be the response of the people of the earth to this?
- Why does God want to be praised? Isn't that a bit insecure?

Tim Keller likens failure to praise our creator to a type of cosmic plagiarism (Tim Keller, *Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God*, chapter 12). It is failure to acknowledge our source, which is bad for us - it is untrue, it feeds our delusion, and it sets us up for future failure.

Read Acts 17:24-28

- How does this passage describe God's ongoing role in creation?
- What other ways do people tend to think of God's role in creation?

Here we're trying to distinguish the Bible's view from Deism's belief in a supreme being who just sets up his "universe machine" and walks away from it, leaving us all to our fate.

Read Colossians 1:15-17

- How did God create the world?
- Why did God create the world?

Read Psalm 19:1-6

- What does it mean for the heavens to "declare the glory of God"?

Romans 1:20

- What does creation tell us about God?
- Why doesn't creation cause everybody to bow down and worship God?

Implications

- Is it possible to know God from creation only, without access to his spoken revelation through his Spirit and his Son?
- What might this understanding of creation mean for our own human creativity?
- How important should beauty be to Christians?
- What does a Christian understanding of creation have to say about ecological issues (climate change, biodiversity, etc)?
- How might you respond to Christians or non-Christians who say it doesn't matter what we do to the world (and who use the Bible as their justification)?
- What is and isn't it possible to know about God through creation alone?

Prayer ideas

Praise God for the some of the beautiful parts of his creation.

Depending on where the implications discussion goes, perhaps you could pray a prayer of confession for the mess we've made of God's earth.