

### Introduction

- We are going to remind ourselves of the fundamental and essential beliefs.
- We believe that God is the all-powerful Creator and Sustainer of all things visible and invisible, who eternally exists in three Persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; and that these three are one God, having precisely the same nature, attributes, and perfections, and are worthy of precisely the same homage, confidence, and obedience. (Matt. 28:19-20)

### Creator

- God the Creator of every single thing that exists.
- There was nothing before God nor nothing equal to God.
- He created in power with purpose, not random chance.
- He did not create out of lack, need, or conflict with other gods.
- This affirms the exclusivity of God and the distinctiveness of God from creation.
- His status as Creator affirms His right to be worshipped.

### Ex Nihilo

- Ex nihilo creation is an ancient Christian belief that was counter cultural.
- We believe God created out of nothing because He was before nothing.
- The secular world largely affirms the eternity of matter.
- The other secular option is that matter was created by chance.
- We deny Deism, Pantheism, Henothism, Polytheism, Atheism, and Gnosticism.
- Ex nihilo affirms that God is distinct from and above all creation.

### Non-Essential

- It is essential to believe God is the Creator, how He creates is not essential.
- It is possible to believe in some form of theistic evolution and still be orthodox.
- It is possible to not take all of Genesis 1-11 literally and still be orthodox.
- The primary non-negotiable is that God is the Creator.
- We should not automatically dismiss someone for holding non-traditional views on Genesis/creation, but we should ask clarifying questions.

### Evolution

- Some forms of theistic evolution can be orthodox, if they hold to essentials.
- They must deny the eternity of matter.
- They must affirm that God is the Creator and sustainer of all things.
- They may affirm that God sovereignly created through the process of evolution.
- They must affirm that Genesis is true and without error.
- They do not have to affirm 24 hour days or 6,000 year old earth.
- They must affirm that man was uniquely created in the image of God.

## Genesis

- You can be orthodox while denying the historicity of much of Genesis 1-11.
- We must ask questions to look for what is essential.
- They must affirm God is the Creator.
- They must affirm the Bible is true and without error.
- There are some godly believers who hold to a localized flood that destroyed most of the known world.

## Sustainer

- God is the sustainer of every single thing that exists.
- The material and spiritual world is under the control of God.
- The universe is not subject to random chance, nor have we been left alone.
- Every breath that is taken is through the sustaining power of God.

## Gospel of Creation

- This means that God is the only God.
- This means that God has authority over all of creation.
- God is distinct from but intimately involved with His creation.
- The gospel is that the Creator will restore all His creation.
- Creation is the presupposition or the starting point of the gospel story of creation, fall, and restoration.

## Takeaways

- Traditional views of the creation story are not the essential part of our faith.
- We need to understand what an essential belief is and why.
- Everything else in our faith fails if God is not the Creator.