

ST. MAXIMUS CATECHISM CLASS 2010 HANDOUT  
MAIN LECTURE 18: CREED 6 "CREATOR OF ALL THINGS"

"I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible."

*Genesis 1.1* "In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth."

*Colossians 1.16-19* "For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him and for Him; and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist."

*Genesis 1:26-27* "And God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion... So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them.'"

*St. John of Damascus, OF II.12* "[God] creates with His own hands man of a visible nature and an invisible, after His own image and likeness: on the one hand man's body He formed of earth, and on the other his reasoning and thinking soul He bestowed upon him by His own inbreathing, and this is what we mean by 'after His image.' For the phrase 'after His image' clearly refers to the side of his nature which consists of mind and free will, whereas 'after His likeness' means likeness is virtue so far as that is possible."

"It cannot be said that God made the world for His own sake, since He can exist without the world...It is obvious, therefore, that the world was made for the benefit of living beings, since it is those beings who enjoy what it contains." *Lactantius, Divine Institutes 7.4*

"But God, who is good, and brought us out of nothing into being that we might share in His goodness..." *St. John of Damascus, Orthodox Faith, I.12*

"God, full beyond all fullness, brought creatures into being not because He had need of anything, but so that they might participate in Him in proportion to their capacity and that He Himself might rejoice in His works, through seeing them joyful and ever filled to overflowing with His inexhaustible gifts." *St. Maximus 400 Chapters on love, 3.46*

*Romans 8:19-22* "For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope. Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now."

1. The philosophers of Greece have made much ado to explain nature, and not one of their systems has remained firm and unshaken, each being overturned by its successor. It is vain to refute them; they are sufficient in themselves to destroy one another. Those who were too

ignorant to rise to a knowledge of God would not allow that an intelligent cause presided at the birth of the Universe; a primary error that involved them in sad consequences. Some had recourse to material principles and attributed the origin of the Universe to the elements of the world.. Others imagined that atoms, and indivisible bodies, molecules and ducts, form, by their union, the nature of the invisible world. Atom reuniting or separating, produce births and deaths and the most durable bodies only owe their consistency to the strength of their mutual adhesion: a true spider's web woven by these writers who give to heaven, to earth, and to sea so weak an origin and so little consistency! It is because they do not know how to say "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Deceived by their inherent atheism it appeared to them that nothing governed or ruled the universe, and that was all was given up to chance. To guard us against this error, the writer on the creation, from the first words, enlightens our understanding with the name of God...He first establishes a beginning, so that it might not be supposed that the world never had a beginning. Then he adds "Created" to show that that which was made was a very small part of the power of the Creator....If then the world has a beginning, and if it has been created, enquire who gave it this beginning, and who was the Creator: or rather, in the fear that human reasonings may make you wander from the truth, Moses has anticipated enquiry by engraving in our hearts, as a seal and a safeguard, the awful name of God: "In the beginning, God created." It is He, beneficent Nature, Goodness without measure, a worthy object of love for all beings endowed with reason, the beauty the most to be desired, the origin of all that exists, the source of life, intellectual light, impenetrable wisdom, it is He who "in the beginning created heaven and earth." Do not imagine, O man! that the visible world is without a beginning...*St. Basil the Great, Hexameron, Homily 1.2-3*

2. It is the force of these reasons, say the inventors of the fifth kind of body for the genesis of heaven and the stars, which constrained them to reject the system of their predecessors and to have recourse to their own hypothesis. But yet another fine speaker arises and disperses and destroys this theory to give predominance to an idea of his own invention. Do not let us undertake to follow them for fear of falling into like frivolities; let them refute each other, and, without disquieting ourselves about essence, let us say with Moses "God created the heavens and the earth." *St. Basil, Hexameron, Homily 1.11*

3. You will finally discover that the world was not conceived by chance and without reason, but for a useful end and for the great advantage of all beings, since it is really the school where reasonable souls exercise themselves, the training ground where they learn to know God; since by the sight of visible and sensible things the mind is led, as by a hand, to the contemplation of invisible things. "For" as the Apostle says, "the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made" [Romans 1.20]....The beginning, in effect, is indivisible and instantaneous...."In the beginning God created," it is to teach us that at the will of God the world arose in less than an instant..." *St. Basil, Hexameron, Homily 1.6*

4. Do not ask, then, for an enumeration of all the elements; guess, from what Holy Scripture indicates, all that is passed over in silence." *St. Basil, Hexameron, Homily 1.7*

5. If matter is uncreated, it has a claim to the same honors as God, since it must be of equal rank with Him. *St. Basil, Hexameron, Homily 2.2*

6. It is equally impious to say that evil has its origin from God; because the contrary cannot proceed from its contrary. Life does not engender death; darkness is not the origin of light; sickness is not the maker of health....If then evil is neither uncreated nor created by God, whence comes its nature?...Evil is not a living animated essence; it is the condition of the soul opposed to virtue, developed in the careless on account of their falling away from good. Do not then go beyond yourself to seek for evil, and imagine that there is an original nature of wickedness. Each of us, let us acknowledge it, is the first author of his own vice.... Do not look for the guiding cause beyond yourself, but recognize that evil, rightly so called, has no other origin than our voluntary falls. *St. Basil, Hexameron, Homily 2.4*

**Lessons:**

1. God made all that is. Creation *ex nihilo*, while not expressly taught, is not contradicted by the account and is our understanding.

*Chrysostom, Homilies on Genesis 2.2* “To say that things that exist were made out of some primary matter and to deny that the Creator of all made everything out of nothing would be the height of stupidity.”

2. Creation is good. Material world is good. No dualism

*Genesis 1:31* And God saw all the things that He had made, and, behold, they were very good.”

3. The World being made by God bears witness to God: It reveals His power, wisdom, and goodness. (Psalm 8, 18/19, 103/104) Romans 1

*Psalm 18/19:1* “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims the work of His hands.”

*Psalm 8:1* “O Lord our Lord, how wonderful is Thy name in all the earth! for Thy magnificence is exalted above the heavens.”

*Romans 1:19-23* “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse...”

*Athanasius, Against the Heathen 35.1* “God gave the universe the order it has, using His own Word to do so, so that people who cannot see Him, because He is invisible, may come to know Him by His works.”

4. Man is made in the image of God. Image and Likeness

*Genesis 1:26-28* And God said, Let us make man according to our image and likeness...

*Genesis 2:7* And God formed man of dust of the earth, and breathed upon his face the breath of life, and the man became a living soul.

According to St. Maximus, likeness is being and eternal being, which we have as a free gift; likeness is goodness and wisdom, which we attain to by will and effort assisted by grace.

5. God made the world for man to rule. Genesis 1:26-28; Psalm 8:4-8

*Genesis 1:26-28* And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

*Psalms 8:4-8* What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet: All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.

6. Our World is not the Garden of Delight; creation is subjected to a curse so that we have to work hard; not Perelandra (C.S. Lewis) Death entered the world.

*Genesis 3:18-31* “Because thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife, and eaten of the tree...cursed is the ground in the labors, in pain shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee, and thou shalt eat of the herb of the field. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat thy bread until thou return to the earth of out which thou wast taken, for earth thou art and to earth thou shalt return.” *LXX Brenton*

*Romans 8:19ff* “For the earnest expectation of the reation eagerly awaits the unveiling of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but on account of Him who subjected it in hop; because even the creation itself shall be freed from the slavery of corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that all the creation groans together and labors in birth until now.” *Complete Apostles’ Bible*

For further reading:

Pomazansky, Fr. Michael. *Orthodox Dogmatic Theology. Chapter 3, pp. 105-140.*

Payton, James R. Jr. *Light from the Christian East. Chapter 5 ‘Creator and Creation’ pp. 85-101.*

St. John of Damascus. *Exposition of the Orthodox Faith. Book 2.*

St. Cyril of Jerusalem. *Catechetical Lectures. Lecture IX.*