

Origins

Jesus, Creator of Heaven and Earth

Lesson #1 for January 5, 2013

Scriptures: Genesis 1:1; Hebrews 11:3; Psalm 19:1-3; John 1:1-3,14; Colossians 1:15,16; John 2:7-11.

1. Read Genesis 1:1. What is implied by this verse? Is it true that something that is created is always lesser than or inferior to the Thing which created it? Therefore, is God greater than the universe? Does He actually exist in every part of the universe at one time? Is the God that you worship and have come to understand from the biblical narrative greater than the universe?
2. Human beings have created massive and powerful things out of other things. Are human beings greater than nuclear weapons? Pyramids? Massive buildings? Space shuttles? Can any of those things move on their own? Can they reproduce?
3. God who is capable of existing in every part of the universe at the same time must be incredibly powerful and great. Why would He care about our little planet—the one spot of sin in the universe? Why would He condense Himself into the body of a baby boy and live the life which He did, dying that awful death at the end when He could have instantly just eliminated our world and started over? How is/was God's creation related to His redemptive activities?
4. A careful reading of Isaiah 40-55 teaches us that there are two identifying marks of the true God: 1) His ability to create out of nothing, (Psalms 33:6,9) and 2) His ability to predict the future far in advance. (Daniel 2,7,8,9) Is it any surprise that since Satan cannot do either of those things, he has done everything possible to attack the record of God's creation in Genesis 1-11 and God's predictions of the future far in advance—especially those in the book of Daniel? Genesis and Daniel have been attacked more than any other books in the Bible.
5. What are the implications of the fact that our Creator God has taken such personal responsibility for us even in our sins? Did He really need to come and die because a relatively small group of individuals living on this small blue marble of a planet rebelled against Him?
6. Even the angels were surprised and amazed that God would do such a thing.

The heavenly intelligences were prepared for a fearful manifestation of Almighty power. Every move was watched with intense anxiety. The exercise of justice was expected. The angels looked for God to punish the inhabitants of the earth...The heavenly universe was amazed at God's patience and love. To save fallen humanity the Son of God took humanity upon Himself. *Review and Herald*, July 17, 1900; (4RH 201:1:4-201:2:1) Compare *Desire of Ages* 37
7. One of the major challenges of this series of lessons is to look seriously at the two major explanations for origins. Fiat (the ability to command something to happen and it does happen) or divine creation versus the Big Bang and evolution. We will look at four aspects of this question as we move along. There are: 1) Arguments in favor of a divine creation; 2) Arguments against a divine creation; 3) Arguments in favor of the Big-Bang-evolution; 4) Arguments against a Big-Bang-evolution.
8. It was not until the days of Charles Darwin that it was even possible to suggest that there might have been a mechanism for the origin of our species other than divine fiat creation. It was not until late in the 20th century when the Big Bang theory began to be propounded that there was any other possible explanation for the origin of the universe. However, as a result of a lot of astronomical studies—particularly from the Hubble space telescope—the evidence that the universe had a beginning has become so powerful that virtually all scientists accept it. This is based on the fact that the universe is expanding. So, it must have had a start.

9. What are the implications of saying that the universe had a beginning? Often, those who reject the idea of God as Creator have tried to mock Christians asking where God came from. But, that question can be thrown back at them in this form: If God does not exist as Creator, then where did the Big Bang come from? Neither creationists nor Big-Bang evolutionists have an ultimate answer to either of those questions. We just do not know.
10. Read Hebrews 11:3. As creationists, we believe that God created our entire universe *ex nihilo*. *Ex nihilo* means “out of nothing.” The story is told of an evolutionists who challenged God. So, one day, God spoke to him saying: “You believe that it is possible to produce life in all its forms through the processes of evolution and survival of the fittest. Could you show me how that works? Can you create anything at all through that process?” The scientist smiled and said, “Let me show you.” He reached down and grabbed a handful of dirt and started off toward his laboratory. Then God said, “Wait! Hold on just a minute! Get your own dirt!”
11. Einstein is credited with putting together or discovering the famous formula, $E=MC^2$. This formula suggests that it takes an enormous amount of energy to produce even a small amount of matter. As human beings, we have partially proven this theory by the production of bombs which use nuclear fusion and/or fission and electricity from nuclear reactions. By very complicated nuclear reactions, we have been able to destroy a small amount of matter and produced enormous amounts of energy in a destructive form. But, in the creative process, God took enormous amounts of energy and produced matter. Only God knows how to reverse that $E=MC^2$ equation.
12. Read Romans 4:17. Scan through Isaiah 40-55. Do you believe and accept the idea that only God could create our universe? Do we believe that He created it out of nothing?
13. Read Psalm 19:1-3 and Romans 1:19,20. Is it clear to you that God can be seen through what He has made? Do you get a clear picture of God from what you see in nature?
14. Scientists have become more and more sophisticated in their study of nature. All scientists work with the same data. Creationists interpret it one way, evolutionists another. They have demonstrated that all matter as we know it is made up of protons, neutrons, and electrons. These subatomic particles are put together in a marvelously balanced way, or we could not exist. There must be an attraction and a repulsion of the sub-atomic particles in order for them to exist. And those two forces must be very carefully balanced. If the attractive forces were too strong, only large atoms could form; there would be no hydrogen. Of course, without hydrogen there would be no water and no possibility for life as we know it. If the repulsive forces within atoms were too strong as compared to the attractive forces, only small atoms could form. There would be no oxygen or carbon. Once again, no life would be possible.
15. But, the attractive and repulsive forces within atoms are only part of the story. When atoms are put together as molecules, they also have attractions and repulsions. Otherwise, it would be impossible for atoms to react together through chemical processes to make other substances. This balance of forces is so remarkable that many scientists have admitted that there must be an Intelligent Design and an intelligent Being behind the design.
16. A recent survey of science has suggested that there are at least 49 such exactly balanced forces—or else, life could not exist.
17. The possibility that this did or could have happened by accident is astronomically small.
18. Life as we know it on this small blue planet is dependent on temperature, distance from the sun, the tilt of the earth, the speed of our rotation, the composition of our atmosphere, and the nature of water in addition to many other factors that make it virtually impossible that it could have happened by accident. Think of all the trouble God went through to design a planet just suited for us.

19. Read Jeremiah 51:15,16 and Psalm 33:6,9. In addition to the incredible wisdom required to put together a world like ours—not to mention the universe—God also had to have incredible power to do it. He created merely by speaking. For example, look at water. Like other molecules, as water cools from steam to liquid and down to 4°C, it occupies progressively less space; it becomes more dense. However, as it freezes to solid ice, it expands so that ice floats, unlike other substances in which the frozen or solid form is even more dense than liquid and sinks. Fortunately, for a small range of temperatures from 4°C down to water's freezing point at 0°C, instead of shrinking water expands before it forms into crystalline ice. Because of this very unusual characteristic of water, cold but non-freezing water sinks to the bottom and ice floats, and the coldest water is not on the bottom. If these unusual features of water were not true, ice would sink to the bottom of oceans and lakes and be covered by almost freezing water; and quickly, those bodies of water would freeze over from the bottom and may stay frozen, perhaps all year or longer, and life here on Earth would be impossible.
20. Our atmosphere is made of 79% nitrogen and 21% oxygen. There are also a number of other elements and molecules present in very small quantities. When lightning occurs in connection with rain, the powerful electric forces in the lightning break apart a lot of nitrogen and oxygen molecules. Many of those free nitrogen and oxygen atoms combine and produce millions of tons of fertilizer every year. Far more fertilizer is produced by lightning than by all the fertilizer factories in the world. If this were not true, the ground would long since have lost its fertility; life as we know it could not exist. Who do you suppose figured that out!
21. The story goes on and on. God created every form of energy, matter, fuel, the stars, and galaxies. He created the laws that control all of nature including gravity.
22. This is one point that many scientists choose to overlook or ignore. The truth is that God created not only nature but all the laws of nature. He is the one who makes all things work as they do according to natural or really supernatural processes. So, when studying nature, scientists are really studying God's laws. But, God is not limited by the laws of nature that we understand. Without a doubt, there are many laws about which we do not know anything yet. More than that, should He choose to do so, God can enter our world and supernaturally do things outside of natural law.
23. One of the fundamental laws of nature is the law of conservation of matter and energy. That law states that the total amount of matter and energy in the universe must remain constant. By definition, that law makes creation impossible. But, it also makes the Big Bang impossible!
24. Is it possible for our feeble intellects to even comprehend all of this? How do we take in the idea that a God who is that big wants us to call Him "Father," even "Daddy"? (Romans 8:15)
25. Read John 1:1-3,14; Colossians 1:15,16; and Hebrews 1:1,2. These verses make it very, very clear that the God who is/was the Creator of the universe is the same Person who came down to our world and lived as a human being. Try to think of the implications of the God of the universe becoming a tiny little baby boy. While that baby boy was born in a way familiar to us, He had already existed for eternity past as the Creator-God of the entire universe.
26. We can get a picture of what that God was and is like by our study of Scripture— especially our study of the life of Jesus. Paul called Jesus the "firstborn" of creation. That is not to imply that Jesus was born and did not exist before that. The word *prōtokos* means a "Big Brother" who is the Head of the family. That was an idea very familiar to the Jews in His day.
27. In light of all of this, how would you answer the question, "What is your God like?" Where would you go for evidence? The answer is the Bible. God chooses to allow us freedom.
28. Read John 2:7-11; 6:8-13; 9:1-34. John tells us that his Gospel was written specifically to provide the evidence for our faith. (John 20:30,31) Through these three miracles—1) turning

water into wine, 2) feeding some 20,000 people from five loaves and two fish, (Why hadn't that boy eaten his lunch?) and 3) healing a man born blind—Jesus demonstrated even while here on this earth His creative power. In each case Jesus performed an *ex nihilo* creation. We might think that creating wine out of water is not so difficult to understand. Grapevines do most of that work every year. Of course, the grapevine needs a lot of other chemicals in addition to water to make its juice. Creating fish and bread is a little more complicated, but we might come to understand, more or less, how that process works. But, think of the incredible creative power Jesus had to exercise to make the man born blind able to see. The occipital portion of his brain had never had the experience of vision—putting together the nerve impulses into patterns that are recognizable. His brain had to be rewired and perhaps his eyes had to be fixed in order for him to see. But, even if the eyes were working and the nerves were working, where did he get the memory to know what he was looking at?

29. Do we believe that God actually has the power to rewire our brains? Even to instill all the memory patterns necessary for vision to be functional?
30. These miracles might stimulate faith in our thinking. But, there is a danger in making miracles the main basis for our faith. Television evangelists claim to perform miracles all the time. And then, they teach many things about God which are not true!
31. God wants us to base our faith on solid evidence that we have carefully evaluated and checked out. See *Steps to Christ* p. 105.
32. Ellen White says:

The theory that God did not create matter when He brought the world into existence is without foundation. In the formation of our world, God was not indebted to pre-existing matter. [He may have used it, but He was not indebted to it.] On the contrary, all things, material or spiritual, stood up before the Lord Jehovah at His voice and were created for His own purpose. The heavens and all the host of them, the earth and all things therein, are not only the work of His hand; they came into existence by the breath of His mouth. [Psalm 33:6,9]—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, pp. 258, 259.

33. In order to try to explain how humans evolved, scientists have invoked a lot of very lucky accidents called “anthropic coincidences.” In light of all we have studied even briefly in this lesson, is it possible that we are the result of a lot of very lucky coincidences?
34. There are many Christians who believe that God must somehow have used the processes of evolution in His creative endeavors. If God is as wise and powerful as we believe He is and if He could have created a Big Bang, why not just create the universe as we know it?
35. How should we respond to all of this information? Should our response be like that of Isaiah's in Isaiah 6? What makes God, God? If He was indeed the Creator, as we believe, He had to be there before anything else.
36. If God created everything, does that automatically give Him sovereign rights over everything? Couldn't a sovereign God who is truly all-powerful have prevented sin? Why didn't He? Remember that it is His creative power that keeps us alive every day. So, how should we react in the presence of such a God? Awe and worship are the only appropriate responses.

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