



NG Study Guide: Gen 1:1-2 “Creation: Where Did We Come From?” Apologetics Series Pt. 4 [8.5.18]

Love God + know the Bible better:

1. Read the passage cited above, and try to answer the questions below before your group meets.
2. **Leader note:** *Please review the brief instructions for leaders at the bottom.*

The Study

Thesis: Since the dawn of civilization, people have pondered how the universe, life and humankind came into existence. The answer to this question has fundamental implications for every aspect of your life. There is substantial evidence to indicate that the God of the Bible is the Creator of the universe. If this is true, it gives a profound hope to trust in the remainder of the Biblical narrative, and also to respond to the true and living God in worship.

Genesis 1:1-2

¹ In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ² The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

I. The Evidence for God as Creator

A. The Biblical Evidence

Before examining evidence for God as Creator outside of the Bible, it's important to establish that the Bible clearly declares the Judeo- Christian God as Creator. In light of Genesis 1:1 it is clear the Bible refutes all other explanations for the origin of life or the universe. Thus, every person is rendered in a position to either accept the Biblical explanation of creation or reject it.

Some alternative origins explanations & their incongruence with the Bible:

1. pantheism is the idea that God is the sum of everything in the universe. This is impossible with the Biblical narrative because Genesis 1:1 is clear that God existed *before* creation.
2. polytheism is the belief in multiple gods. Every time God is mentioned in the Genesis creation account it is singular, indicating there is clearly only one God.
3. dualism is the idea that there are two gods, one good and one evil locked in an eternal epic struggle that maintains the balance of the universe. In Genesis it is clear that God is the sole creator and is entirely good. The spiritual forces that oppose Him are not equal with Him as they are created beings as well (Gen. 3:1).
4. atheism/ evolution/ naturalism are some of the commonly accepted explanations for the origin of life and the universe in contemporary western society. These argue that there is no God and everything

we see and know arose through complex natural processes over a long period of time. This cannot align with the scriptural narrative because of the use of the Hebrew term *bara* in Genesis 1:1 which means literally to “create from nothing”. Also note that God created Adam and Eve with the appearance of age (Gen. 1:27).

B. Evidence outside the Bible

For those who may be skeptical about evidence inside the Bible, there is an impressive body of evidence outside of Scriptural canon to suggest the existence of Creator (Ro. 1:20, Psalms 19:1)

1. The universe bears witness of intelligent design

a. the universe had a definite beginning

Evidence has emerged that there was a definite beginning to the universe and life. For all the theory of evolution claims to offer, it fails to explain where the first living cell would have come from. Nothing in the field of science has ever emerged to suggest life could come from non-life. Additionally, deep space telescopes such as the Hubble, have observed a phenomenon known as “red-shifting”. Red shifting is the movement of distant stars and galaxies farther and farther away, meaning the universe must have had a definite beginning point. Logically, this would indicate a cause-and-effect relationship and God is the best explanation as a cause for the universe.

b. the planet earth is finely tuned for the existence of life

It is also incredibly remarkable how finely tuned the planet is for the existence of life. Take into consideration that if any of the following were true, life would not be possible;

- (1.) nitrogen to oxygen ratio in the atmosphere changes by more than 2%
- (2.) rate at which earth spins on its axis changes by more than 2%
- (3.) gravitational pull of planet changes by 1-2%
- (4.) any slight change in the ratio of land to water on the planet

2. fossil evidence supports creation

The fossil record also supports the idea of creation. The theory of evolution purports that small variations in organisms over long periods of time will eventually cause one species to evolve into another. This includes the theory that modern day human beings evolved from lower primates. However, there is no fossil evidence of any transitional species. In other words, the “missing link” is still missing.

3. microbiology supports creation

A third evidence of creation by intelligent design has to do with microbiology. In the 1950s, the discovery of DNA brought an awareness that a living cell was far more complex than previously thought. American biochemist Michael Behe argues for an idea known as “irreducible complexity” which states that the complexity of a living organism makes it inherently impossible to evolve from something less complex. Removal of one or more of the systems within a complex organism would not allow it to exist and thus it could not have evolved.

4. physics supports creation

A few of the laws of physics also demonstrate that creation by intelligent design is a plausible explanation for the beginning of life and the universe. The Law of Conservation of Energy states that energy can neither be created nor destroyed, but can only change forms. In order for the universe to begin to exist some outside force would have had to introduce energy into the system. Another physical law that would be violated by evolutionary theory is the Law of Entropy, that everything naturally moves from order to chaos. Scientists postulate that due to the law of entropy the universe is “winding down” to an eventual

entropic “heat death”. The development of complex, organized systems necessary to sustain life would violate the law of entropy, once again suggesting that some outside force would have been necessary for life to develop.

5. *The Origin of Species* is questionable

Darwin’s famous publication in 1859, *The Origin of Species*, was the beginning point of modern day evolutionary thought. Darwin had observed small changes within a species as they adapted to survive in differing conditions. From these observations, Darwin theorized that, over time, this “survival of the fittest” would cause one species to evolve into another, and thus was born the theory of evolution by natural selection. However, as science is a discipline that deals with the observable and Darwin’s theories were far too grandiose to observe, even the scientific community has questioned the validity of Darwin’s theories on evolution by natural selection. Consider the following quote from Sir Arthur Keith in the 50th anniversary edition of the *The Origin of Species*

“Evolution is unproved and unprovable. We believe it only because the only alternative is special creation, and that is unthinkable” -Sir Arthur Keith (Scottish anatomist and anthropologist, 1866-1955)

6. the existence of “strong force”

One of the fundamental laws of physics is that opposites attract. In the subatomic world, negatively charged electrons and positively charged protons are drawn to one another. However, within an atom, the nucleus is made up of protons and neutrons and is orbited by electrons. For reasons that scientists have been unable to explain, the nucleus of atoms does not break apart as protons are drawn to the electrons orbiting around them and instead choose to remain connected to the neutrally charged neutrons in the nucleus. Scientists simply call this “strong force” because they have no way to explain it. Consider “strong force” in light of Colossians 1:17. The “him” referred to here is Jesus.

“And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.” Col 1:17 (ESV)

7. flood geology

Many ancient cultures across the globe have some form of flood narrative, evidence that the global flood described in Genesis actually occurred. If this were the case, it could certainly account for much of the geology and paleontology that is observed today. In the 1980s, the eruption of Mount St. Helens in Oregon triggered massive debris flows that in a matter of days created geologic strata similar to that seen in other parts of the world and that scientists estimate is millions of years old. Afterwards, scientists admitted that had they not known this had happened over the course of just a few days, scientific measuring methods would probably test those strata layers formed at Mt. St. Helens as millions of years old. This phenomenon of a catastrophe creating the appearances of age can explain scientific anomalies such as fossils whose age does not match the geologic strata where it was uncovered (e.g. dinosaur bones found in the same layer as modern mammals).

II. The Response to God As Creator

In view of the evidence that God is our Creator, how are we called to respond to Him?

A. You were created for relationship with God

After Genesis 1 and 2, God ceases to address creation and spends the rest of the Biblical narrative dealing with the human relationship to God, how it was broken by Adam’s sin in the Garden, the turmoil and pain that followed as humanity was separated from God and the glorious redemption that was accomplished through Jesus Christ.

B. You are called to acknowledge God as Creator

The aforementioned Romans 1:20 establishes that God has revealed His glory in creation. When you acknowledge God as Creator, there are profound implications for the rest of your life:

1. Worship is the right response (Romans 1:20-25)

Acknowledging God as Creator means that you recognize God is distinct and greater than His creation. By recognizing that God is above you, you are putting God in a position to be worshipped above everything else in the universe. This means worship of God takes priority before worship of anything or anyone else, including yourself, your spouse, kids, friends, job, hobbies, etc... Romans 1: 22-25 warns about the consequences of believing the lie that God doesn't exist and exchanging the worship of the Creator for worship of the creation.

2. Awe of Jesus and the Gospel (Psalm 8:3-4)

*When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers,
The moon and the stars, which You have ordained,
What is man that You are mindful of him,
And the son of man that You visit him?
- Psalm 8:3-4*

One of the most amazing aspects of God as Creator is how deeply He cares about His creation. The fact is that God is so high *above* us yet Jesus came in the flesh and dwelt *among* us should inspire awe in our hearts. If you truly want to be stirred in your affections for Jesus think about the scope of the universe and then think that the God who created all of that desires an intimate relationship with you and made that possible through the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus.

Study Guide Qs

Q1: As you observe the beauty and complexity of the world around you, what does it tell you about God?

Q2: As you look at the evidence for Creation listed above, what did you learn and how has this encouraged you in your faith?

Q3: How does knowing God is your Creator influence your worship or desire to worship?

Q4: Consider the alternative explanations for the origin of life/ the universe that we discussed (atheism, evolution, naturalism, polytheism, pantheism, dualism). Which of these have you encountered in the world and how can you respond Biblically when you encounter one of these?

“Digging Deeper” (optional or alternative study)

- 1. Spend sometime enjoying God’s creation this week (take a walk or a hike, visit the beach, or just spend sometime sitting in a park or other outdoor area). Write down some of the ways you see God revealed in His creation and share the experience with someone.**
- 2. Read the following passages of Scripture: Genesis 1 & 2, Psalm 19:1-6 and Romans 1:20-25. Discuss what you discover about the relationship between God Himself, the while of Creation, and you as an individual.**

Love your neighbor *outside* the group better:

1. Who would like to share how they sought to befriend or build relationship with their neighbors where they live, work, study, or play this past week?
2. Are there some needs that can provide us an opportunity to love our neighbor outside the group?
3. Here is a neighboring idea(s) for us to consider for the week(s) ahead:

Invite a neighbor to share in experiencing God’s creation with you (take dogs on a walk, visit a park with your kids, strike up a conversation on a hiking trail or at the beach). Ask them what draws them to experience nature and share your reasons of worshipping the Creator by enjoying His creation.

Love your neighbor *inside* the group better:

1. Are there some needs in our group that can provide us an opportunity to love our neighbor within the group?
2. What might we do about that need to help?

Prayer [Loving God and Neighbors better]:

Close the NG meeting with a time of group prayer. Encourage each participant to pray, but don’t force anyone to pray. Encourage the group to keep their prayers brief so that each person can pray.

Leader Notes:

- 1. Seek to involve as many group participants as possible.** A good group discussion time allows people to get to know the passage and one another better.
- 2. Feel free to pre-select the discussion questions that you want to focus on** in case there isn’t enough time to answer them all.
- 3. Feel free to use an icebreaker question or activity** to get to know one another better.
- 4. Every time you meet consider asking:**

a. What about this passage is particularly exciting, challenging, or confusing? If a leader is uncertain about a question of doctrine or theology don't hesitate to follow-up with your coach during the week. Then revisit the issue(s) when the group gathers next time.

b. How would each of us like to apply the truths we learned to our life? This question may be answered simply by completing the study guide. Nevertheless, it will generally be beneficial for leaders to encourage each participant to conclude the study by considering how he or she desires to apply the lessons learned.