

# God's Existence, Part 2

By R. Keith Loftin

## Pre-Session Assignments

One week before the session, participants will take the following assignments.

### Assignment One

Read the comments related to Romans 1:19-20 in the section **It's in the Book**. Prepare to share your answers to the following questions: To how many people has God made Himself known? What evidence for God have you seen in creation? Do we have more evidence today for God's "invisible attributes" than Paul had in the first century?

### Assignment Two

Read the comments related to Psalm 19:1-6 in the section **It's in the Book**. Prepare to share your answers to the following questions: What is the psalmist saying about the cosmos in these verses? How does the author express the *constancy* of this revelation?

### Assignment Three

Prepare to share your answers to the following question: Other than its having a beginning, what features of the cosmos indicate the existence of God?

### Scripture to Memorize

*"For His invisible attributes, namely, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse."* Romans 1:20

### Session Goal

Consistent with God's Word and in the power of the Holy Spirit - by the end of this session, disciples will understand how the beginning of the cosmos points to God's existence.

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## It's in the Book

30 minutes

### Real-Life Scenario

Imagine that one clear evening you and your friends cross the parking lot to your car. One friend remarks on the beauty and magnitude of the starry sky. "I wonder how old the world really is," another asks. You hear one of your unbelieving friends answer, "It's been here forever. Everyone knows the universe never began!" How would you respond?

**Read** Romans 1:19-20 out loud.

### Studying the Passage

**Verses 19-20. God . . . divine nature . . . has been made.** In the context of discussing mankind's rejection of God, Paul made clear that no one can say, "I didn't know about God." One reason for this is that God has revealed Himself through His creation of the cosmos. Sadly, people have closed their minds to this revelation by rejecting God. Yet Paul was clear that God's revelation in the cosmos renders people "without excuse."

### Assignment One Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment One** during the week can now report on their observations of God's revelation in creation.

### Discussion Question

What other features of the universe indicate God's existence? What are some reasons people are generally insensitive to these features?

### On Your Own

According to Colossians 1:16, "For by Him [Christ] all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities – all things were created through Him and for Him." Why do you think Triune God (Father, Son and Spirit) decided the Son would be the One to speak the cosmos into existence? In the space below, write what you might say to a friend who thinks Jesus was *only* a good man.

**Read** Psalm 19:1-6 out loud.

### Studying the Passage

**Verses 1–6. The heavens . . . He has set . . . nothing hidden.** In this beautiful passage the psalmist proclaimed the majesty of God displayed in the cosmos. We read once again that God's revelation in creation is universally available to all. It transcends human language. Whereas many people have worshipped the heavenly bodies themselves, the psalmist is clear that these created entities point to their Creator. The Bible repeatedly tells us that the created universe indicates God's existence.

Think about the universe: It either began to exist or it is infinitely old. A little thought reveals that if it began to exist, the universe must have some sort of cause. Why? Because you cannot get

*something* from *nothing*. This is obvious to anyone with understanding. After all, consider what denying this would mean. This would call for the belief that something can pop into existence from nothing! But the absurdity of such a claim is plain. For example, who *genuinely* believes that, say, a wild animal could just pop into existence out of nothing, uncaused, here in our midst? Or a jet airplane - or anything! No one does, and that's because we all recognize that from nothing, nothing comes. This means that whatever begins to exist must have a cause.

### **Assignment Two Feedback**

The person who completed **Assignment Two** during the week can now report on their observations of the psalmist's words regarding the nature of God's revelation in the cosmos.

### **Discussion Question**

Do you agree that whatever begins to exist must have a cause of its existence? Can you think of anything that began to exist *without* a cause? Does this mean God Himself must have a cause?

### **Beginning of the Cosmos and God's Existence**

The Bible teaches that the universe did, in fact, begin to exist. The universe is not infinitely old but had a birthday. If, as some people say, the universe never had a beginning, then its history is made up of an infinite number of days. Now think about the collection of days that comprise history. Did all those days simply spring into being all at once? Of course not! Rather, the days we call "history" occurred successively.

In other words, history was formed by adding one day at a time, one after another, sequentially (event after event, day after day, year after year and so on), until we arrive at the present day. This is why we speak of history's "growing" as days are added to it.

To say that the universe had no beginning is to say that the collection of history has been growing this way – by adding one day at a time – from infinity past until the present. That idea has major problems. Think about it: since history grows by adding one day after another, history cannot contain an infinite number of days.

You simply *cannot* build an infinite collection (of anything) by adding one member after another. Why? You can *always* add one more member to your collection; however, an infinite number cannot be added to (it's already infinite!). Take counting, for example. No matter how many numbers you have already counted, you can always count one more number. This is true regardless of how much time you spend counting—you will never reach infinity!

Perhaps another illustration will be helpful. Imagine you're reading a book and you're on a certain page. Obviously, before reading *this* page, you first read the one before it, and the one before it, and the one before - all the way back to the first page. And because there is a first page, you only had to read a finite number of pages before getting to where you are in the book. But what if you had to first read an infinite number of pages before getting to this current place in the book. When will you get there? Never! Because for every page you read, there's always one more! No matter how much time you had to read, you would *never* be able to read through an infinite number of pages.

The history of the universe works the same way. If the universe had to get through an infinite number of days before today, then today would never occur. But guess what? Here we are!

So we see that (1) whatever begins to exist has a cause, and (2) the universe began to exist, which means that (3) the universe therefore has a cause. The fact that the universe began to exist at some point in the finite past means the universe must have an infinite, transcendent cause of its existence.

### **Assignment Three Feedback**

The person who completed **Assignment Three** during the week can now share an answer to the question: Other than its having a beginning, what features of the cosmos indicate the existence of God?

### **Discussion Question**

Are there any other reasons to think the universe began to exist? What must the cause of our universe be like? Does thinking about how features of the universe (such as its beginning) indicate God's existence strengthen your faith? Does this lesson give you confidence to talk to others about Jesus, who spoke the universe into existence?

### **On Your Own**

Suppose you had a five-year-old sister. Imagine that at bedtime she asked you, "Do you really think there is a God? How do you know?" In the space below, write what you would say, using terms your sister would understand.

## **Heart and Hands**

8 minutes

Read again the **Real-Life Scenario** near the beginning of the lesson. Consider whether your answers have changed during the session.

Be silent for two or three minutes. Thank Jesus for His sacrifice and for the gospel. Adore Him for His glorious reign on the throne of heaven. Then ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you:

1. A way the Scriptures you studied today will change your heart for the glory of Christ.
2. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to stop doing something for the glory of Christ.
3. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to do something for the glory of Christ.

Write what the Spirit reveals to you below and then be ready to share what you have written with the group.

**Since Last Week**

5 minutes

**Grace-Filled Accountability**

5 minutes

**Planning for Evangelism, Missions, and Service**

5 minutes

**Prayer**

7 minutes

## **At Home: Nail It Down**

Romans 1:19-20 tells us that God has revealed Himself to all people through His creation so we can know about Him by contemplating the universe. Paul made it clear that no one can say, "I didn't know about God." Some people have closed their minds to this revelation by rejecting thoughts about God, yet Paul is clear that God's revelation in the cosmos renders people "without excuse."

In Psalm 19:1-6 we learn that God's revelation in creation is universally available to all persons and that the heavenly bodies point to the reality of their Creator. Whereas many people have worshipped the heavenly bodies themselves, the psalmist is clear that these created entities point to their Creator.

The psalmist and the apostle Paul both tell us that the universe points to its Creator. The universe directs attention to God in many ways, including the fact that the universe has a beginning. Whatever begins to exist must have a cause for its existence. That certainly must apply to the beginning of the universe. This cause (God) must itself be uncaused (transcendent); otherwise its coming to exist likewise would need an explanation. This is amazing confirmation of God's existence!

### **Follow-up Question**

*What is one way the universe indicates the existence of God?*

The Making Disciples curriculum is a gift from Southwestern Seminary to those who, for the glory of the Father and in the power of the Spirit, will spend a lifetime embracing the full supremacy of the Son, responding to His kingly reign in all of life, inviting Christ to live His life through them, and joining Him in making disciples among all peoples.