

Lesson Three

The origin of the universe is a popular topic. People have proposed many conflicting theories about how the universe came into being and about how life began. In this lesson we find the answers to these questions from the only eye-witness to creation — God himself. We will look at where the universe came from, how it was created, how long it took to create, the creation of people, and God's interaction with his creation.

Where did the universe come from?

God says:	From this we know:
<i>Genesis 1:1</i> "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth."	God created the universe.
<i>Hebrews 3:4</i> "For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything."	

So now that we know who did the creating, the obvious question is, how did God create the universe? Did he use a cosmic explosion? Did he use clouds of gas and dust? The problem with any such theory, is that before the universe existed, there was nothing to create the universe from; there was only God. So if there was no material for use in making the universe, how did he do it?

God says:	From this we know:
<i>Psalms 33:6</i> "By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; their starry host by the breath of his mouth."	God created the entire universe out of nothing by the power of his word.
<i>Hebrews 11:3</i> "By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible."	

Another thorny issue in the discussion about the origin of the universe is the length of time it took. Some say that what we see today took billions of years to create. But what does God say about how long creation took?

God says:**From this we know:**

Exodus 20:11 “For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day.”

God created the universe in 6 days.

So contrary to popular opinion, the one who created the universe tells us that he completed his work within one week. The first chapter of Genesis details the events that took place during that first week.

God says:**From this we know:**

Genesis 1:1-5 “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. God called the light ‘day,’ and the darkness he called ‘night.’ And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.”

On the first day, God created the heavens and the earth as well as light. He also established day and night.

Genesis 1:6-8 “And God said, ‘Let there be an expanse between the waters to separate water from water.’ So God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above it. And it was so. God called the expanse ‘sky.’ And there was evening, and there was morning—the second day.”

On the second day God created the atmosphere.

Genesis 1:9-13 “And God said, ‘Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear.’ And it was so. God called the dry ground ‘land,’ and the gathered waters he called ‘seas.’ And God saw that it was good. Then God said, ‘Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds.’ And it was so. The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the third day.”

On the third day God formed the oceans and dry land. He also created plant life.

God says:**From this we know:**

Genesis 1:14-19 “And God said, ‘Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years, and let them be lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth.’ And it was so. God made two great lights—the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars God set them in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth, to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the fourth day.”

On the fourth day God created the stars, sun, moon, and planets.

Genesis 1:20-23 “And God said, ‘Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky.’ So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living and moving thing with which the water teems, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. God blessed them and said, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth.’ And there was evening, and there was morning—the fifth day.”

On the fifth day God created sea life and birds.

Genesis 1:24-31 “And God said, ‘Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals, each according to its kind.’ And it was so.

On the sixth day God created land animals and people.

God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.’

God says:**From this we know:**

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.' Then God said, 'I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food.' And it was so. God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.”

Some would claim that what the Bible is speaking about here is not six literal days but six very long periods of time. However, the text is very clear that God completed his work of creation in six normal days. This is most clearly seen by the repeated phrase, “and there was evening, and there was morning,” indicating the passing of one day. There is no room for long period of time in this description of creation. It is just six literal days.

Another common claim is that God created the basic materials for the universe, but that he just “kicked things off,” and let Chance (i.e. Evolution) do the rest. The result is that they think humans are just another animal, only better adapted than others. We have already seen that God was actively involved in all stages of creation. Furthermore, he also tells us that there are some very special differences between humans and the rest of the creatures he created. What was special about the creation of people?

God says:**From this we know:**

Genesis 2:7 “The LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.”

Matthew 10:28 “Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.”

God took special care in creating the first man out of created material. He also gave each person a soul—a part of the person that exists even after the body dies.

God says:	From this we know:
<p><i>Genesis 1:27</i> "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."</p> <p><i>Ephesians 4:24</i> "...and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness."</p> <p><i>Colossians 3:10</i> "...and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator."</p>	<p>God created Adam and Eve in his image.</p> <p>The image of God--sinlessness (holiness) and knowing God's holy will perfectly.</p>

Not only did God take special care in the creation of people, but he is still intimately involved with his creation. He is not a distant observer; he plays an essential role in the universe. What is the part God still plays in the universe?

God says:	From this we know:
<p><i>Job 12:10</i> "In his hand is the life of every creature and the breath of all mankind."</p> <p><i>Matthew 5:45</i> "He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous."</p> <p><i>Psalms 145:15, 16</i> "The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food at the proper time. You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing."</p>	<p>God graciously preserves all creation and provides for all living things normally by natural means.</p>
<p><i>Psalms 91:11</i> "For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways."</p> <p><i>Hebrews 1:14</i> "Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?"</p> <p><i>Genesis 50:20</i> (From the story of Joseph) "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives."</p>	<p>God especially takes care of those who believe in him. He uses natural and supernatural means (such as angels) to do this. Angels are spirit beings created by God sometime during the 6 days of creation. He works out "bad" things for the eternal good of those who believe in him.</p>

God says:	From this we know:
<p><i>Romans 8:28</i> “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”</p>	

How should we respond to all that God has done for us?

God says:	From this we know:
<p><i>Psalm 95:6</i> “Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker....”</p> <p><i>Psalm 118:1</i> “Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever.”</p>	<p>We can thank God by worshipping and serving him.</p>
<p><i>1 Peter 5:7</i> “Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.”</p>	<p>We can thank God by trusting him.</p>
<p><i>Isaiah 64:8</i> “Yet, O LORD, you are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand.”</p>	<p>We can thank God by humbly acknowledging that we are creatures and that God is our Creator.</p>
<p><i>Psalm 102:18</i> “Let this be written for a future generation, that a people not yet created may praise the LORD....”</p>	<p>We can thank God by teaching others about him and his love for his creation.</p>

All Bible passages are from the New International Version.