



8

How Do I Know God Exists?

Key Themes

- God is the only eternal being.
- God's existence makes sense of the entire universe.

Key Passages

- Genesis 1:1; Exodus 3:13–15; Romans 1:20–21

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Explain that only God can be eternal and exist outside of time.
- Connect the order in the universe to the existence of God.



Lesson Overview



Come On In

page 5

Students will place bookmarks at Genesis 1, Exodus 3, and Romans 1 in their Bibles.
Students will practice placing all the books of the Bible in order.



Studying God's Word

page 5

God, the only eternal being, makes sense of the entire universe. The orderly creation points to a Creator.



Activity 1: Backyard Variety

page 7

Students will watch the DVD clip and note how creation reveals the Creator and His attributes.



Activity 2: Big Bang—Sense or Nonsense?

page 10

Students will make their own “big bang” with LEGO® bricks, puzzle pieces, or model pieces to see if something orderly can come from a big bang.

Lesson Preparation

WHAT YOU WILL DO

WHAT YOU WILL NEED



COME ON IN

- ☐ Cut paper into strips for each student to mark Genesis 1, Exodus 3, and Romans 1 in their Bibles.
- ☐ Prepare the Books of the Bible cards for the students. The template for these is on the Resource DVD-ROM, Lesson 3.

- ☐ Strips of paper for each student
- ☐ Books of the Bible cards—one set for every 3–5 students



STUDYING GOD'S WORD

- ☐ Study the Prepare to Share section.
- ☐ Go Before the Throne.

- ☐ Student Take Home Sheets



BACKYARD VARIETY

- ☐ Preview the Backyard Variety video clip (2:32) found on the Resource DVD-ROM.

- ☐ Backyard Variety video clip
- ☐ TV and DVD Player or computer



BIG BANG—SENSE OR NONSENSE?

- ☐ Bring in some LEGO® bricks, a jigsaw puzzle, and/or model pieces. Students will be shaking up the box and making their own “big bang” by dumping the pieces out to see if they can get an orderly creation from chaos.

- ☐ LEGO® bricks, a jigsaw puzzle, and/or model pieces
- ☐ Box with a lid



Memory Verse

Psalms 119:89–90 Forever, O Lord, Your word is settled in heaven. Your faithfulness endures to all generations; You established the earth, and it abides.

► **Pace your lesson!** You can use the provided clocks to indicate the time each section should be completed to keep the lesson on schedule. While teaching, you can compare your anticipated times with the actual time and shorten or drop sections as necessary.





Prepare to Share

SCRIPTURAL BACKGROUND

As you prepare to approach this very important lesson, read and reflect on the following Scriptures: Genesis 1:1; Exodus 3:13–15; Romans 1:18–21; Psalm 19:1–6.

“How do I know God exists?” This is a question that has been and will be debated as long as sinners occupy the earth. First of all, as Christians who walk by faith and not by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7), we do not need to prove the existence of God. The Bible says that we accept God by faith—that we *believe* that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him (Hebrews 11:6). Because the Bible is our basis for all we believe, we believe in God as presented in the Bible.

God’s Word begins with the proclamation that He and He alone existed from eternity past: “In the beginning God . . .” (Genesis 1:1). If He had wanted to prove Himself to the world in a way our minds could grasp, He could have done that. God saw no need to explain further. Belief in Him as the one true God comes by faith and trust in Him and His Word.

Genesis 1 continues to describe this God who spoke the entire universe into existence. The order we see in creation—from the stars, solar systems, animal and plant life, to the natural laws of gravity, motion, and thermodynamics—gives evidence of an omnipotent Creator. There is no other explanation. The universe is not a result of random chance. It was created by one who was not created. There had to be someone who never came into being. There had to be a Creator. God—the one true God—is that Creator, who was and is and is to come (Revelation 4:8).

As we look to the Scriptures, we see that God described Himself to Moses as “I AM WHO I AM,” which essentially means: *the one who is and will be* (Exodus 3:13–14). The eternal, self-existent nature of God is revealed through His Word and simply assumed. Through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, again, John records that the Lord is the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty (Revelation 1:8). What more do we need? This describes the only, holy, omnipotent, omniscient God of the universe—who was and is and always will be. He is not bound by time as we know it. He created time in the beginning (Genesis 1:1).

God in His mercy has also specifically revealed Himself through His incredible creation. “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament shows His handiwork” (Psalm 19:1). And the Apostle Paul tells

us that since the creation of the world, God’s invisible attributes have been seen through creation, revealing His eternal power and Godhead—leaving those who do not believe in Him without excuse (Romans 1:18–21). God does indeed exist. His existence is confirmed in Scripture and through His creation—and the wrath of God will be revealed from heaven against all who suppress the truth of His existence in unrighteousness.

APOLOGETICS BACKGROUND

Look around you; what do you see? An amazingly designed universe—from the single cell to the vast and immeasurable solar system. And yet the debate for a Creator of such things rages. We can rest in God’s Word, “In the beginning God . . .” (Genesis 1:1). We know that if something exists, it was somehow created into being. And as Christians we know who that Creator was. But what of folks who state there was no Creator—it all began with a bang, a very “big bang,” one that allegedly occurred billions of years ago in one tiny speck of mass and energy, a speck that would one day become everything we see today?

This story of the big bang originated with an attempt to completely discount the Bible and its account of our Creator God. Christians who buy into it need to understand the atheistic beginnings of this secular story and why it cannot be “added” to the biblical account of Genesis 1 without destroying the Bible’s integrity.

From a practical standpoint, have you ever blown something up and then observed the pieces re-assembling into a complex . . . anything? No, when buildings are demolished they pretty much end up in a heap of debris with no order or design. And yet, the big bang proposed by some has produced intricate life and more. In fact, this notion claims that out of a random explosion and expansion of matter billions of years ago, life in its complexity and beauty—from the human body to the ant, from the wonder of the solar system to the universe beyond—has been organized and arranged into the complex world we live in today by nothing more than random, natural processes.

But, we know that the very existence of design, order, natural laws, and principles in the universe demands that there was a Creator—an Organizer, a Designer—not a big bang. That Creator can only be the one true Creator God. The only one who has declared Himself the Creator (Genesis 1), and the only one who proclaims that He Himself is sustaining the universe—personally maintaining life and upholding

all things by the word of His power (Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 1:3). This Creator, our God, is truly worthy to receive glory and honor and power—for He created all things, and by His will they exist and were created (Revelation 4:11)!

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The serpent asked, “Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?’” (Genesis 3:1). And when Adam and Eve succumbed to this deception, that’s when sin, deceit, pride, evil, hatred, death, and suffering entered the world. From the very beginning, people have wanted to be their own gods—and Satan is the primary encourager of this. The God of the Bible demands obedience, reverence, and accountability. God will one day judge the world in righteousness (Psalm 96:13).

Those who believe God’s Word know this to be true—we believe God exists. However, many doubt the very existence of God. These atheists boldly turn from the greatest commandment—“You shall have no other gods before Me” (Exodus 20:3)—to pursue the imaginings of their own minds. Our culture has been shaped by these people who claim there is no God. We’ll look at a few of them here.

Charles Darwin, the father of evolution, although not a proclaimed atheist, was influenced immensely by his atheist grandfather Erasmus. Darwin’s idea of evolution has changed the course of human history and is one of the greatest attacks on the Word of God in our modern time.

Karl Marx, referred to by some as the greatest thinker in all of history, once stated that religion is the opiate of the masses—impotence of the human mind to deal with occurrences it cannot understand.

Sigmund Freud, considered by some as psychology’s most famous figure, believed that religion was nothing more than an expression of underlying psychological neuroses and distress.

More recently, Madalyn Murray O’Hair was instrumental in removing prayer from the public schools in 1963. She believed that religion has caused more misery to all of mankind in every stage of human history than any other single idea.

And today we have those who are referred to as the

“new atheists”—men such as Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hitchens, and Sam Harris—and they are aggressively going after your children, your liberties, and your faith! Dawkins, a scientist and an active leader in this movement, believes that one of the things wrong with religion is that it teaches us to be satisfied with answers which are not answers at all. These men and others have accused Christians of “child abuse” for teaching their children the Bible and passing on their faith.

The worldview of these atheists is dangerous to our culture. However, as Christians we are confident in the promises of the Word of God. We must not lose heart. We must be committed to proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ and enthused about keeping God on His throne as Sovereign Creator and Sustainer of all (Colossians 1:17). God has assured us that His Word is settled forever and His faithfulness will endure to all generations (Psalm 119:89–90).

For more information on this topic, see the Online Resource Page.



BEFORE THE THRONE

Dear God, I cannot begin to convey the message of this lesson without your help. How do I know you exist? It is by faith alone that you have opened my eyes to see and my ears to hear the truth, power, beauty, and wonder of who you are. Your creation screams out for all to notice that you are the omnipotent one—but without the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, we cannot begin to comprehend any of it. Lord, give me wisdom as I try to convey to these precious students that you truly do exist. Open their eyes to your truth—just as you have opened mine. Help them to walk by faith in who you are and not by sight. Allow them to see you clearly—and to one day grasp the love and grace you poured out through the gospel of our Redeemer Jesus Christ. Thank you, Lord, for this amazing privilege.



COME ON IN

As students arrive . . .

- Provide slips of paper to mark Genesis 1:1, Exodus 3:13–15, and Romans 1:20–21.
- Provide envelopes containing cards with the names of the books of the Bible for groups of 3–5 students. Students are to place the books in the proper order. They can use the Books of the Bible poster or their own Bibles to confirm the right order. If time allows, have them do it a second time without looking at the poster or their Bible. You may want to time them and determine who finishes first.



After all the students arrive, pray with them before beginning the lesson.



REVIEW

Using the Lesson Theme Posters provided with each lesson, quickly review the previous lesson(s) with your students. Take 5 to 10 minutes to reinforce the important truths the students have heard so far in your class.

Ask the children questions about the previous lessons as you display the Lesson Theme Posters. Reflect briefly on the passages you read, bringing the objectives and themes back into focus. This will refresh the truths in your students' minds and maintain continuity as you teach through the lessons.



Studying God's Word

READ THE WORD

? Does anyone know the first four words in the whole Bible? Go ahead and take a look. What book of the Bible would that be in? *Genesis.*

? And what are the first four words? *"In the beginning, God . . ."*

That's correct. They are the first words in the first verse of the first chapter of the first book of the first Testament in the Bible! Please turn to that reference in your Bibles. Let's read the whole verse together. *Read the verse as a class.*

Genesis 1:1

EXAMINE THE WORD

Since these are the very first words of the Bible, they tell the very first hours of the world's history. Let's examine them more closely. *Refer to the Bible Study poster to remind your students how to dig deeper into God's Word by asking the right questions.*

Observe the Text

? Who was there in the beginning? *God. Some may say the Trinity—which is true. God is three in one.*

? Why is God the only one there? *Allow students to answer. Because God hadn't created anything yet.*



That's right. God was the only one. This is the beginning of time as we know it. This is when God started to create the universe by the power of His voice. And it was only about 6,000 years ago.

? So what was before this? *Allow students to answer.*

Discover the Truth

Before this—before Genesis 1:1—God was. He always was. God is infinite. That means He has always existed and He will always exist. He is the only eternal being. He said, “In the beginning, God . . .” and that was it. God is. God always was. God always will be. He is infinite and eternal. *Refer to “eternal” on the Attributes of God poster.*

eternal

(Refer to Attributes poster)

Let's read the definition of eternal together from our Attributes of God poster. *Always was and always will be.*

And because God is eternal, He is not bound by time as we know it in any way. He created time, but He existed before He created it. He exists outside of time as we know it.



READ THE WORD

Now go to the book of Exodus. We're going to read a little about Moses. God had sent Moses to lead His children out of Egypt and into the Promised Land—a beautiful country God had prepared for them.

However, Moses was afraid to lead the people as God asked him. Moses didn't think the people would listen to him or want him to be in charge. God assured Moses that He would be with him. Yet Moses still had his doubts. Let's read together what Moses asked God and how God answered.

Exodus 3:13–15

Let's read Exodus 3:13–15. *When everyone finds it, choose three students to read one verse each.*

EXAMINE THE WORD

Observe the Text

- ? What did Moses ask God? *What shall I tell the children of Israel? Who should I say sent me? What is Your name?*
- ? What is God's answer in verse 14? *He said I AM WHO I AM and I AM has sent me to you.*

Right. God said His name was I AM.

When God said this, He was saying that He is the one who is and always will be. God Himself was telling Moses that He is eternal.



Discover the Truth

Again, we have the Bible—God’s Word—telling us that God is the eternal one—the one who always was, the great I AM. You see, something or someone had to be here before anything else came to be. Do you see that? There had to be someone who never had a beginning—someone who was there when creation began. That someone is the one and only true God. He is God of creation, He is the God of Moses, and He is the same God for us today. He is the same God throughout all the future ages, too. God exists! He is the only eternal one. He is the one that had to be before anything we know of existed.

So we know that there had to be someone who didn’t have a beginning. And if we can imagine—back, back, back—further than we can even imagine—there is God the eternal one who is not bound by the time that He created.

Take a look at our timeline poster. You could put hundreds of timelines just like this one—one right after the other—and still God exists. He has always been here. Someone had to be here to begin creation. *You can reference the Seven C’s Timeline to make this point.*



Backyard Variety

MATERIALS

- ☐ Backyard Variety video clip (2:32) from the Resource DVD-ROM
- ☐ TV and DVD player or computer

INSTRUCTIONS

- ? Have you ever thought that in your own backyard, there are many things that point to the eternal Creator God?
- ? Do you have anything amazing hanging out in your yard that reminds you that God exists whenever you see it? *Let the students answer. Perhaps spider webs, a special pet, butterflies.*

We are going to watch a short video clip that will give us some examples of things we may see every day that are reminders of God the Creator. *Play the Backyard Variety DVD clip.*

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

- ? As you watched that clip, what jumped out at you as the most incredible fact or creature that makes you think, “There *must* be a Creator”? *Allow students to remember their favorite creature.*
- ? Which attributes of God does creation make you think of? We have a list of them displayed right here in this room. Any ideas? *Refer to the Attributes of God poster. Allow students to list some of the attributes of God that they connect with God’s creation: Omniscient, omnipotent, eternal, etc.*

When we take a look at our next Scripture passage in Romans, you may be surprised to learn that it says exactly that. The creation points to the Creator—just like we were noticing!



READ THE WORD

Turn to Romans 1:20–21. Romans is an epistle or letter that was written by the Apostle Paul. God wanted Paul to write this section to people who said they didn't believe in Him. Let's see what God has to say about that.

Romans 1:20–21

Let's read Romans 1:20–21. *Assign readers.*

EXAMINE THE WORD

Observe the Text

- ? Now who did I say Paul was talking about in this part of his letter? *People who did not believe in God.*
- ? OK. Look carefully at verse 20. What is clearly seen in this text? *His invisible attributes.*
- ? Whose invisible attributes? Who is "His" referring to in this verse? *God.*
- ? What might some of those invisible attributes be? We mentioned some already today. *Refer to the Attributes of God poster. Talk briefly about these attributes—they reflect God and God alone.*
- ? Good; now how long have God's attributes been seen by men? We are still looking at verse 20. *Since the creation of the world.*
- ? So this verse confirms what we were talking about earlier. What does verse 20 say can be understood by looking at the things that are made—or by creation? *God; His eternal power; His Godhead.*

When Scripture refers to Godhead it means God's divine nature. His divine nature or Godhead simply means the attributes of God we are learning. *Again, refer to the Attributes of God poster.*
- ? So this part of the letter was written about people who said there is no God. What does God say to that? It is at the very end of verse 20. *They are without excuse.*
- ? Look at the beginning of verse 21. Did these people know God? *Yes.*
- ? How do they know God? *By the things God created.*
- ? They know who God is because of what God made—God tells us that. But how did these people act toward God? The answer is in verse 21. *They did not glorify Him as God. They were not thankful. Their hearts were foolish and dark. Their thoughts were futile.*

Yes. Their thoughts were futile. This means their thoughts had no purpose—they were foolish. They made no sense because God was not a part of them. They did not believe in God.

God is saying in His Word here that all people are able to look around at what He has created and know in their hearts that there is a God. But even then, some will choose to deny what they know in their hearts and

Godhead:
God's divine
nature; His
attributes

turn away from Him and say there is no God or choose to worship false gods. That's why the verse says they are foolish. They know better, but refuse to admit it.

Discover the Truth

There is a very important lesson here in just these two verses! Even back when Paul wrote this letter—and that was almost 2,000 years ago—people were claiming that there is no God.

- ? Yet God tells us in the book of Romans that there is a way that all men know that He exists. What is that? *Through His creation.*

That's right. Think about the DVD clip. In just the few things that were mentioned from one backyard, we could see how God reveals Himself. Zoom out from that small backyard and look at the whole world—the whole universe—and consider all the things that God has made: the oceans, the planets, the stars . . . wow!

Creation reveals God's eternal power and His divine nature in a big way. Because of the very universe that God created we know that there has to be a Creator.

- ? Have you ever noticed how orderly and perfect the universe is? *Yes/no.*

The stars, solar system, plants, animals, the human body—everything is designed to do what it is supposed to do. It is all perfectly organized and designed. Color, variety, and detail all point to an eternal God with a plan and the power to make it all. In Romans 1:20–21 God is saying, when we look at all of His creation we can't help but think of Him, our Creator. If people say they don't believe in God, they are denying the evidence all around them.

- ? Have any of you heard of the big bang? What do you know about that?
Allow students to answer.

To people who don't believe in God or His Word, the big bang is a way to explain how the universe came into existence without God. But it really doesn't make any sense at all. These people believe that there was just one tiny speck of something, but they don't know where that came from. And then there was a huge explosion—a bang—and all the pieces from the bang came together perfectly to begin the creation of the universe, and all that we see today is a result of the big bang. This is nothing but a lie. And people who teach this want to turn us away from God's Word and His truth.

When we look around and see the universe and everything designed in a special way to do what it is supposed to do, then we need to remember that only God could have created it. There is no way it was the result of a big bang. And this is exactly what God's Word tells us in Romans 1. We know that God exists because of the amazing universe only He could have created!





Big Bang—Sense or Nonsense?

MATERIALS

- ☐ LEGO® bricks, a jigsaw puzzle, and/or model pieces
- ☐ Box with a lid

INSTRUCTIONS

Bring out your box or boxes of pieces. You will allow the students to shake them up well and dump them out to emulate the big bang. Will you get something orderly?

So, people think that a big bang came and blew stuff up into a lot of different pieces and when the pieces came together, they made something organized, well-designed, and orderly. Let's see about that.

I have a box of (LEGO® bricks, model parts, puzzle pieces, etc.) here. I want some of you to take turns shaking this box up. Give it a good shake, then dump out all the pieces. You can cause your own big bang. Let's see if the pieces fall together in a sensible way.

- ? Do you think they might make a building or a ship or an animal of some sort? *Probably not.*

- ? Who wants to start? *Allow some or all of the students to "blow up" the pieces to see if anything sensible comes out.*

Connect to the Truth

Well, it doesn't seem to be working. Even with these simple pieces, we can't get the (puzzle, LEGO® bricks, model, etc.) to come together perfectly as a result of our "big bang," can we?

I must say this whole big bang theory just doesn't make sense. People who try to get us to believe this story of the big bang don't believe God's Word, and they don't want others to believe it either.

But we know that God is real and that His Word is true. God is the one who put all things together in a very organized way. His Word tells us in the book of Romans that because of what we see in this amazing universe and world—we KNOW there is a God. He does exist, and He is and was and always will be.



Applying God's Word

WHAT YOU HEARD IN THE WORD

- ? What an exciting lesson! First we looked at Genesis 1:1. Who was "in the beginning?" *God. Show the Lesson Theme poster.*

That's right. God was in the beginning—before He created anything. God is the only eternal being and He is not bound by the time that He created at the beginning of the Creation Week.

When we consider God—that He is eternal and that He is the only eternal being—we realize that He is the one true God and that He is the only God. God was not created by anyone or anything. God is the Creator of all.

And what about creation? We know that because God's creation is so fantastic, it shows us some of His attributes—His wisdom, knowledge, power, faithfulness.

We cannot look at the order of the entire universe without knowing that there had to be one who is eternal—and that is the one who created all of this. And when people say they don't believe in God, or that He doesn't exist, what can we say? God's Word tells us that we can see Him and know Him because of His creation.

GOD'S WORD IN THE REAL WORLD

If you have not already heard about the big bang, you will.

? Does the big bang make sense to you? *No!*

No, it makes no sense at all. Just like we can't even put these simple pieces in order by dumping them into a pile—neither could the universe possibly come into existence that way. *Refer to your big bang object lesson—the puzzle, LEGO® bricks, model, or whatever you used.*

So be ready with an answer if people start to tell you about the big bang. They don't want you to believe in God or His Word. God's amazing divine nature—His attributes—are clear to us through His creation. And you can share the truth with them.

That truth is this. God is our Creator. There has to be someone who always was. There has to be someone who didn't have any beginning. And that someone is the one who created everything. That someone is God. God had no Creator. He is the great I AM.



➤ Pass out the Student Take Home Sheets and remind the students to practice the memory verse this week.



MEMORY VERSE

Psalms 119:89–90 Forever, O Lord, Your word is settled in heaven. Your faithfulness endures to all generations; You established the earth, and it abides.

The passages we've studied today remind me of another great verse in Scripture, which will actually be our new memory verse for the next few weeks. Read the verse with me. *Refer to the Memory Verse poster.*

This verse again tells us that God is eternal and that He did in fact establish (create) the earth. *If time allows practice saying this together a few times.*



GROUP PRAYER TIME

Be sure to pray with your class before you dismiss them.

- Thank God for the truth of His Word.
- Thank God for His creation that proclaims His glory and His attributes.
- Pray that the Lord will open the minds of these students to the truth of His Word through Jesus Christ.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.