

Series: Living Christian Truth in a Doubting World

West Side Christian Church Next Steps Summer Study

Series Webpage: www.RichKnopp.com/living-christian-truth

Part 5

“Knowing Truth about God From Nature”

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Pre-session Instructions for Live Interaction: Go to [menti.com](https://www.menti.com) and use code 1760 4742 OR use this QR code.



Introduction

- A. The importance of having “certitude.”
 - 1. Intellectual certainty is not POSSIBLE.
 - 2. Certitude” is having JUSTIFIED conviction.
- B. Two basic types of God’s revelation:
 - 1. NATURAL revelation (Part 5)
 - 2. SPECIAL revelation (Part 6)
- C. Key biblical passages about God’s revelation in nature.
 - 1. Psalm 19:1-3
 - 2. Romans 1:19-20

I. The Origin and Nature of the Universe.

- A. Scripture points to a BEGINNING (Gen. 1:1; Ps. 33:6; John 1:1-3; Col. 1:15-17; Heb. 11:3).
- B. Science points to a BEGINNING.
 - 1. 19th century view: The universe is *eternal*.
 - 2. The “Big Bang” is suggested (Edwin Hubble in the 1920s).
 - 3. The “Big Bang” is *suppressed* (Arthur Eddington, Fred Hoyle).

“The Big Bang theory requires a recent origin of the universe that openly invites the concept of creation.”
(Fred Hoyle, *The Intelligent Universe*, 237).

- 4. The “Big Bang” *succeeds* (1960s: The Cosmic Background Explorer [COBE] satellite).

“What we found is evidence for the birth of the universe.... If you’re religious, it’s like looking at God”
(George Smoot, leader of the COBE project).

“For the scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of reason, the story ends like a bad dream. He has scaled the mountains of ignorance; he is about to conquer the highest peak; as he pulls himself over the final rock, he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries” (Robert Jastrow, *God and the Astronomers*, 116).

- 5. Some now claim that the universe *created itself* or that it’s just one of an infinite number of universes that “pop” into existence.

Stephen Hawking (atheist): “Bodies such as stars or black holes cannot just appear out of nothing. But a whole universe can.... Because there is a law like gravity, *the universe can and will create itself from nothing*” (*The Grand Design*, 180; emphasis added).

Alex Rosenberg (atheist): “Why is there a universe at all? No reason at all. Why is there a multiverse in which universes pop into existence for no reason at all? No reason at all! (Alex Rosenberg, *The Atheist's Guide to Reality: Enjoying Life without Illusions*, Kindle, pp. 38-39).

C. The wonders of the universe.

D. The wonders of the universe lead to _____ **WORSHIP** _____ (Isa. 45:12; Ps. 8:3-4).

II. The Origin and Nature of Life.

A. Spectacular beauty, variation, and function!

B. The universe began JUST _____ **RIGHT** _____ for life to exist.

1. The “Goldilocks” (or “anthropic”) principle: Dozens of physical constants are amazingly and precisely “just right” for life.
2. Examples (expansion rate of the universe; the number of electrons to protons).

“A common-sense interpretation of the facts suggests that **a superintellect has monkeyed with physics**, as well as with chemistry and biology, and there are no blind forces worth speaking about in nature” (emphasis added).

C. The wonders of DNA.

1. DNA stores and transmits genetic *information* that controls the development, function, growth, and reproduction of every part of every living thing.
2. The DNA in one human body, if stretched end-to-end, would reach over _____ **34** _____ billion miles!
3. One gram of DNA can store the same amount of information as _____ **8.6** _____ million Blu-ray movies.
4. How did DNA get its vast amount of information?

Bill Gates: “DNA is like a computer program but far, far more advanced than any software ever created” (*The Road Ahead*, 228).

Francis Crick (atheist and co-discoverer of DNA): “An honest man, armed with all the knowledge available to us now, could only state that in some sense . . . [the origin of life] is ‘almost a miracle’” (*Life Itself: Its Origin and Nature*, 88).

D. Worship wonder (Isa. 45:18).

III. Nature Points to God and His Qualities (Romans 1:19-20).

A. Perceptions (and misperceptions) of God often generate criticisms and doubts.

B. God **exists**.

1. The universe is not _____ **SELF** _____ **SUFFICIENT** _____.
2. A simple but powerful argument (William Lane Craig at www.reasonablefaith.org).
 - a. Everything that _____ **BEGINS** _____ to exist must have a cause.
 - b. The universe _____ **BEGAN** _____.
 - c. Therefore, the universe has a _____ **CAUSE** _____.

C. God is **eternal and self-existent** (Ps. 90:2; 1 Tim. 1:17a; Ex. 3:14).

1. Question: “Who created God?”
2. God *alone* is self-existent.
 - a. Response 1: Christians should not say that *everything* must have a cause but only that *everything THAT BEGINS TO EXIST* must have a cause.
 - b. Response 2: Aristotle rightly recognized that there must be an ultimate _____ **STOPPING** _____ point.

- D. God is ALL POWERFUL (omnipotent) (Jer. 32:17; Matt. 19:26).
1. Question: "If God is all powerful, can he ... xxxx?"
 2. Response 1: God cannot do logically IMPOSSIBLE things.
 3. Response 2: The Bible indicates that God "cannot" do evil things (Heb. 6:18; 2 Tim. 2:13; James 1:13).
 4. Response 3: Omnipotence means that God CAN do whatever he wants, within his nature, to accomplish his purposes.
- E. God is ALL GOOD (omnibenevolent).
1. Question: "If God is all good, why doesn't he ... xxxx?"
 2. Response 1: God desired love, so he gave human FREEDOM.
 3. Response 2: God established natural laws for order and moral accountability.
 4. Response 3: God can cause good to come from evil (Rom. 8:28)—like compassion (Lk. 10:29-37), greater dependence (2 Cor. 1:8-9), and even repentance (Lk. 13:1-5).
 5. Response 4: God DID do, and WILL do, something about evil (Matt. 26:39; 2 Cor. 4:7-9, 17; Rev. 21:1-4).
- F. God is ALL KNOWING (omniscient) (1 John 3:20; Matt. 10:29-30; Ps. 139:1-4; Matt. 9:4).
1. Question: "If God knows everything in advance (foreknowledge), how can I actually choose (e.g., heaven or hell)?"
 2. Response 1: Foreknowledge does NOT mean that God CAUSES all things.
 3. Response 2: God knows in advance what we will FREELY do.

IV. Reflections

- A. What all this means for YOU.
1. God's **omnipotence** means that he CAN take care of you.
 2. God's **omniscience** means that he KNOWS HOW to take care of you.
 3. God's **complete goodness** means that he WILL take care of you.
- B. You can TRUST God.
1. God's PROMISES (Rom. 4:20-21; 2 Cor. 1:20; 1 John 2:25).
 2. God's PROVIDENCE (1 Pet. 5:7; Heb. 10:23).

V. Suggested Resources

- A. Room For Doubt Animation: "Why Do You Still Believe?" (<https://vimeo.com/327406232>)
- B. Richard A. Knopp. *Truth About God: What Can We Know and How Can We Know It?* Six short videos are available. See details and links at <https://roomfordoubt.com/truth-about-god>.
- C. Resources on science and Christian faith: <https://roomfordoubt.com/recommended-resources/science-and-the-christian-faith>.
- D. Resources for Teens and Young Adults (books, websites, videos): <https://roomfordoubt.com/recommended-resources/teens-and-young-adults>.

NOTE: The recommended reading for Week 6 (July 21) is the last part of chapter 4 in *Truth About God: What Can We Know and How Can We Know It?* pp. 83-106. For devotional times, read and meditate on the points and the Scriptures in this outline.

Reflection and Discussion

“Knowing Truth About God From Nature”

1. What **example** in nature or in living things reveals some truth to you about God? What amazes you and leads you toward worship? Have you had any notable experiences of God through nature?
2. What did you **learn** in this lesson that was especially challenging, insightful, or impactful? What did you learn that you could share with someone you know?
3. What **qualities of God** seem most relevant or most encouraging in your life right now? Why?
4. What **Scripture(s)** seem to interest or affect you most? Why? How might you apply them to your current life circumstances?
5. What **questions** or other **comments** do you have about this lesson?