

Why I Don't Believe in Atheists

Romans 1:19-20

We're going to consider the biblical account of creation in light of two verses in Romans 1, but while you are turning there, I want to begin with Genesis 1:1, where creation is first mentioned and summarized for us in a single verse. You probably know Genesis 1:1 by heart, so you can be turning in your Bibles to Romans 1:19 if you like. But before we get into the Romans text, I want to think through with you some of the important implications of Genesis 1:1: "**In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.**"

I recently listened to a message by A. W. Tozer in which he said that's the single most important verse in all of Scripture, even surpassing John 3:16.

Something in me recoils from the idea of trying to rank the relative importance of key Bible verses, because "**All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable**"—but (of course) Tozer believed that as well. So I think I understand what he meant when he ranked Genesis 1:1 as the Bible's most important text. This is the necessary starting-point and foundation for everything else the Bible has to say.

There is no text in the whole Bible that contains more or explains more than Genesis 1:1. Literally *everything* is in this verse. Everything you can see; everything in existence that

you *can't* see; and everything that ever was or ever will be is encompassed in Genesis 1:1.

Carl Sagan famously opened his television broadcast by declaring that the ordered universe itself is all that is, or ever was, or ever will be. That's a fair summary of atheistic materialism, and it is refuted and corrected in a very pithy way by Genesis 1:1. Here both materialism and atheism are answered in the fewest possible words, without any discussion and without any polemics.

And that's an important point to notice: Scripture is not putting a theory up for debate. The Bible is not making an *argument* here; this text simply declares that God alone is eternal, and He is the Creator of everything else that is, or ever was, or ever will be. And it states those truths as brute facts, not hypotheses looking for proofs. **"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth."** You either believe that or you don't. Moses wasn't trying to start a dialogue about whether it's true or not. He wasn't proposing a premise to be modified by the dialectical process.

So I'm not going to argue the point, either.

But here's what I want to stress before we get to the Romans text: In a brilliant economy of words, Genesis 1:1 gives us a clear and stable starting point from which to look for all the answers to all the great metaphysical questions we wonder about. *Where did everything come from? What does it all mean?* A true understanding of everything you find

mysterious and incomprehensible begins right here, in Genesis 1:1: "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth."

That is the starting point and the opening line of the story the universe. It's also the introduction to Act One in the drama of redemption. But its implications are even more far-reaching than that. Everything we believe about anything is grounded here. This text lays the necessary foundation for a truly biblical worldview. It tells us an essential truth, and it's the very first of all the inspired biblical dogmas.

In other words, this is the vital starting point of *all* truth. Do away with the truth that God created everything out of nothing, and whatever theory on life and the meaning of the universe you come up with after that will not only be unbiblical; your worldview will also be irrational, or fanciful, or incomplete, or internally inconsistent, or devoid of any moral absolutes, or otherwise lacking in both coherence and integrity.

You simply *cannot* construct a logical, comprehensive, intellectually-defensible understanding of life and reality without knowing where we came from and why. For example: If you don't know something as basic as where intelligence comes from, how could you ever actually know that you know anything? How could you be certain of the true meaning of anything? If you reject the idea of an intelligent Creator as the source of all true knowledge, you

can't intelligently explain intelligence. And if you don't know where human intelligence comes from—if you have no clue how we might gain true knowledge of the very first principles of our own existence—then you have no way to account for whatever else you *think* you know or perceive. And that means you ultimately *cannot* know anything for sure.

Postmodern thinkers have figured this out and basically embraced the consequences. This is the dilemma they have created for themselves: They recognize that the minute you remove creation and an all-wise Creator from the bottom row of your intellectual Jenga-stack, everything else that rests on that foundation instantly collapses. You can't really have a clear, consistent, coherent worldview if you can't even figure out where the world came from—right? If you don't know how the universe started, your worldview by definition is grossly deficient from the very outset. If you have no answers for life's most *basic* questions, how could you ever truly be certain of anything? Answer: *you couldn't*.

That's why, starting in the secular academic world, certainty and settled knowledge are practically regarded as outmoded relics of a naive and over-confident past. Open skepticism is now praised as a kind of "humility." And that makes perfect sense from a postmodern perspective, because to imagine that you know something for sure, or to declare anything objectively true when you lack the necessary

foundation for any kind of knowledge is the very height of arrogance, right? If it takes humility to confess that you don't know something, it is the very essence of humility to admit that you aren't really sure of *anything*. And by that same value-system, love means never having to say *anyone else's* point of view is wrong.

That's the currently-dominant value system in much of our culture: skepticism and liberal tolerance seen through the postmodern lens become "humility" and "love." But that's the height of irrationality, because if you start with the premise that there is no God, is not possible to justify the belief that humility and love are inherently better than the alternatives.

Once you eliminate God from your thoughts, what would ever make you think modesty is better than arrogance, or that sacrificial love is morally superior to larceny? Many atheists claim that they *do* believe it's better to be humble than egotistical, and more noble to share than to steal. But atheism doesn't really furnish any rational ground for that kind of moral hierarchy. In a system where good and bad are defined by the survival of the fittest, raw reason would suggest that vulnerability is the evil of evils.

Virtues like love, humility, meekness, and longsuffering belong to the Christian worldview. Skeptics who believe such things are virtuous have simply borrowed values from the very faith they disavow. And inevitably, they twist those

values out of shape, opting instead for counterfeit love and a false humility.

See: If you give up belief in an intelligent Creator, every spiritual, moral, and intellectual fact you think you know suddenly loses its clarity under a murky cloud of perpetual uncertainty. You simply can't know *anything* with settled conviction, and you can't have any kind of fixed, objective moral standards. Everything becomes hopelessly relative.

And yet, with full awareness of those consequences, fallen human minds are still determined to reject God and suppress the truth about him. That's one of the points we're going to see in Romans 1. But listen also to Romans 8:7: "**The mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God.**" Unregenerate people hate the God who reveals himself in creation and in Scripture. So even though the devoted postmodernist realizes his skepticism undermines and will ultimately collapse his whole moral framework and his fundamental understanding of the universe, he refuses to set aside his unbelief and affirm the necessity of a Creator. Instead, he repudiates the possibility of an orderly and comprehensive worldview.

That's why *meaning* is so elusive in postmodern discourse.

Now think this through with me one more time, and I'll say it in the simplest way I know how: The skeptic looks at the question of how everything came from nothing, and he tells himself, *This is a question that cannot be answered.* But

if you have no explanation for how anything came to be in existence, then (quite literally) what you are saying is that you don't know the first thing about anything. That's the high cost of skepticism. *Eliminate God from your knowledge, and you basically give up knowledge altogether. You forfeit the possibility of certainty about anything.*

As I said, the postmodern mind has essentially accepted those consequences. That's why *uncertainty* is the defining characteristic of postmodern thought. Postmodernists are pretty certain that certainty is an impossibility. So they reject all the necessary tools of intelligible discourse—clarity, specificity, noncontradiction, fixed definitions, objective facts, and ultimately settled knowledge itself. Those things are simply *impossible* concepts for postmodern people to embrace. The postmodernist claims no one can really know the true meaning of anything—or even say for certain that anything has "true meaning." Because the postmodern mind has rejected the very foundation of understanding from the get-go. The only option is irrationality and infinite relativism.

That's an option that sane and sober minds used to reject. Give up knowledge; throw out every hint of certainty; eliminate all objective truth; and you have completely given up the possibility of true meaning. *But meaningless is a sure-fire recipe for human despair.* It's a suicidal path in many ways.

For one thing, if you rule out God at the start, and then follow that trail without flinching or compromising or pretending or turning aside, it is a direct path to moral and intellectual nihilism. Eliminate the truth of creation and the Person of the Creator from your understanding, and the toll on your character along with the damage done to your understanding is a price too high for anyone to pay.

So what we believe about the origin of the universe has dramatic practical consequences. Creation is not just an interesting a theoretical enigma. The question of where we came from is not a riddle for fun that you can safely set aside like a sudoku puzzle that was too hard to solve. We are dealing here with one of the fundamental issues of human life and existence. Every sentient being wonders about these things: Where did everything come from, and what set it all in motion?

That's the very question Genesis 1:1 gives a definitive answer to. And because it's such an *important* question, with profound ramifications and far-reaching consequences, the answer the Bible gives is not complex. It's not deeply philosophical. It's not hard to understand. It's the very essence of simplicity: **"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth."**

One other thing by way of introduction, before we turn to Romans 1: That question ("*Where did everything come from, and what set it all in motion?*") is not a conundrum that can

be untangled using bare human reason, intuition, philosophy, or dialectics. God Himself had to *reveal* the answer. The answer doesn't lie within us. It is also not a question that can be settled by natural science, because science deals with observable, repeatable phenomena that can be tested, measured, demonstrated, and verified. By definition, creation *ex nihilo* (begetting *everything* out of *nothing*) is not one of those activities you can run experiments with.

Obviously, astrophysicists, cosmologists, geologists, theoretical physicists, and other scientific types talk about the issue and acknowledge the difficulty of it. They put forth various theories about big-bangs, dark energy, endless cycles of existence, or whatever. One thing all the currently popular academic theories have in common is the idea that creation occurs spontaneously, without any concept of God or an intelligent designer. But the truth is, none of those theories could ever be proved by the scientific method, because there is simply no way to recreate the process. Plus, the whole idea of spontaneous creation is totally fanciful, not scientific. That *should* be obvious on the face of things.

It also needs to be said that the issue of origins is not answered, even theoretically, by *evolution*. Evolution posits gradual changes between species. It doesn't even address the question of where everything came from in the first place. Evolution sidesteps *that* question—and for a very simple reason: evolution cannot account for the origin of life, much

less the origin of matter, motion, energy, and the rest of the universe.

So where did it all come from? Scripture says our eternal, omnipotent, intelligent God has the power to call things into existence out of nothing by His Word, and that's how the universe began. Hebrews 11:3: "**By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.**" Try to answer the question of origins leaving out God and you end up with this impossible, irrational formula: Nobody plus nothing equals everything. That's the equation you have to accept in order to be an atheist.

Atheism is sheer nonsense. Only a "**fool says in his heart, 'There is no God.'**" No matter how many scientists are comfortable with it, and no matter how many academically-credentialed geniuses add their *amen* to it, it is simply not rational to think that this vast, dynamic, orderly universe sprang from nothing—with no intelligent architect and for no particular reason.

There *are* people, determined to sustain their disbelief in God, who suggest the possibility that human life was planted on earth by extra-terrestrials—intelligent beings from other planets or different dimensions. I mentioned Carl Sagan, the astronomer and astrophysicist who attained celebrity status through his television series on PBS. He was devoted to projects that went looking for life elsewhere in the universe.

But intelligent life in outer space would only push the cosmic questions further out there. *Where did your hypothetical space-alien get their start? Who created them? And where did they get their superior intelligence?*

Any theory about the origin of the universe that eliminates God as Creator turns out to be impossible nonsense. Without God, where did the original stuff (matter, energy, ectoplasm, or whatever) come from? Or if you think matter has been here eternally—if time and matter are the ultimate realities—why isn't everything inert? If you think *energy* is the ultimate reality, what keeps it in constant flux, and how does it produce so much order and so many perfectly-designed systems and organisms? The relentless return to those very same questions demonstrates the irrationality of the atheist's position. It's a bottomless hole of infinite regress.

On the other hand, the biblical account of creation is truth revealed by the one Being who was actually *present* at creation. Here is the one true answer to the great cosmic conundrum from the Creator Himself: "**In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.**" That truly is a vitally important fact. Without it, nothing else makes good, sound, rational sense.

Now with all of that in mind, look with me at Romans 1:19-20, and let's talk about some of the vital truths God has built into creation.

Romans 1:19-20. Here's some context: Paul has just stated in verse 18 that unrighteousness is the motive that causes people to suppress the truth about God. In our natural, fallen state, the only way we can live with our own guilt is to deny what we know to be true about God. Guilty sinners cannot abide God's wrath against sin, His holiness, or any of His other righteous attributes—and in the end, the determined sinner will even deny that God exists.

But, the Bible says, they know better. Their own consciences bear witness to both their guilt and their God. Furthermore (verse 19): **"What can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. 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."**

That's our text, and the central idea of that text is simple: God plainly reveals Himself in creation. All of creation is divine revelation. The universe itself is designed to reveal God and put His glory on display. Furthermore, creation is His most obvious self-revelation.

In the words of Psalm 19, **"The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork."** Anyone who simply looks at creation can see ample truth about God,

clearly revealed. Listen to the next few verses from Psalm 19. Creation speaks at all times: "**Day to day . . . and night to night**" (v. 2). It speaks in all languages: "**There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard**" (v. 3). It speaks to all people: "**Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world**" (v. 4). So the universe reveals God in a way that is always accessible across every language barrier to everyone without exception. There is no excuse for not seeing that.

Now, it makes perfect sense that if you reject the most basic and most conspicuous truth that God has revealed about Himself, *of course* you won't be able to make good sense of God or anything else. And that's exactly what the Bible teaches. First Corinthians 2:14: "**The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.**"

So here's the point I want to zero in on: No matter how popular it may be to object to creation on supposedly scientific grounds; no matter how many great minds among the academic elite reject the truth creation reveals, there is no excuse and no justification for their skepticism, because creation itself is a brilliant work of revelation. That's why the universe is so vast and awesome; to make obvious the immeasurable greatness of the Creator. Creation is God's

self-revelation. The truth is right there, wherever you look around you.

So what truths are revealed in God's creation? What kind of truth about God, His character, His attributes, the way He works, or other points of theology are spread out for us and "**clearly perceived . . . in the things that have been made**"?

I see three categories of vital doctrine that are obvious on the face of the visible universe. Here's how I would classify the key truths God has revealed in creation: 1. The magnificent glory of God; 2. The fallen glory of humanity; and 3. The awful curse of sin. Let's look at those categories, one at a time. First, consider:

1. THE MAGNIFICENT GLORY OF GOD

Now, as Scripture says, this is obvious. "**What can be known about God is plain to them**" (v. 19). That doesn't mean, of course, that *everything* you could possibly know about God is revealed in nature, because you would never discern the truth of the Trinity—or the incarnation and mediatorial work of Christ—by looking at nature. Some of the truth we need to know about God must be taught to us by special revelation. That's what the Scriptures are for.

But the stress here is on the *clarity* of the revelation given to us through creation. To paraphrase: "**what can be known about God [in nature] is plain to [see].**" Creation is not a vague or

indistinct revelation. Its message is crystal-clear, and it's everywhere you look.

Furthermore, the universe actually has a lot to say about God. A host of God's attributes are patently obvious in creation—His vast power, His wisdom, His love of beauty and order, and even His lovingkindness and His sovereignty. Those are just some samples of the divine attributes *Scripture* points out and says they are visible in nature.

To cite one obvious example: Jesus said God's lovingkindness and sovereignty can be discerned from the fact that He dresses the lilies in glorious clothing, and He knows every movement of every sparrow.

Or consider the book of Job. I think the second half of the book of Job is one of the most breathtakingly amazing sections in all the Bible. Job has suffered unspeakable grief. He has been subjected to a confusing mix of some pretty good and lots of really bad counsel from his friends. He has deflected their accusations against him; he has complained bitterly about his circumstances (just as you and I would); and he has questioned and challenged God regarding the *reasons* for his sufferings. Then when Job has pretty much hit rock bottom in his despair, God finally arrives on the scene—not with words of comfort and an explanation for Job. God comes in a whirlwind, with a rebuke aimed at Job.

Now bear something in mind; God Himself had already said this about Job: "**There is none like him on the earth, a**

blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil." Those were God's words of affirmation, spoken to the devil *about* Job in Job 1:8.

But God's words to Job himself were of a different sort. The Lord scolded him for thinking too little of God—for entertaining thoughts about God that underestimated and miniaturized the Almighty. (And by the way, if God scolded a man like Job for having stunted thoughts about God, what do you think He would say to the rest of us?)

Anyway, chapters 38 through 41 of Job record the Lord's reprimand, and it's a catalogue of truths about God that are visible in nature. He starts out in Job 38:4: "**Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?**" That's a reference not only to the Lord's omnipotent strength, but also His infinite wisdom. Continuing in verse 4: "**Tell me, [Job,] if you have understanding[, the Lord says]. Who determined [the earth's] measurements--surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone, when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?**" That's a poetic description of the creation event.

The Lord's rebuke goes on for four full chapters, citing things only the Lord Himself can do—things that are beyond the realm of human power or comprehension; things the Lord has made that are too wonderful for the human imagination; and things the Lord knows, that are hidden to every creature.

For example, he challenges Job with the classic epistemological conundrum (v. 36): "**Who has put wisdom in the inward parts or given understanding to the mind?**" He points to animal instinct as proof that knowledge has been placed in the minds of living creatures by a mind infinitely wiser than the most intelligent human. Chapter 37, verses 27-28: "**Is it at your command that the eagle mounts up and makes his nest on high? On the rock he dwells and makes his home, on the rocky crag and stronghold.**"

By the time you get to chapter 40, God is still speaking: "**Shall a faultfinder contend with the Almighty? He who argues with God, let him answer it.**" In other words, if you think you are entitled to question God or doubt Him, look at all that He has made, and then think again.

The point is that God's power and His wisdom are so clearly on display in creation that even a righteous man like Job had no right whatsoever to question God—even though Job was in the deepest pit of despair without any explanation of why, and even though he was suffering without so much as a single word of comfort or hope from God. It was not his place to subject God to cross-examination.

Now: the point here is *not* to magnify Job's guilt. The Bible expressly says he was the best of men. The point is to magnify the glory of God. That glory fills the universe; it is written in capital letters and bold type for anyone who has eyes to see.

That is, in fact, the most obvious truth we learn about God from nature: He is glorious. Every molecule of the universe unveils and declares God's glory. You can see amazing, majestic displays of incomprehensible glory from any conceivable perspective. The glory of God is on display in vivid, intense, and graphic detail—no matter where you turn your eyes.

Look in the most powerful telescope at the outer edges of the current technology's ability to see, and what you will observe is breathtaking glory.

Look in a microscope at any random drop of pond-water and you'll see glory of a different kind, but equally impressive.

Take even the ugliest, most grotesque-looking insect, and examine it closely under a powerful lens. You cannot help being astonished at the intricacy, the ingenuity, and even the beauty of the way that bug was designed and made. The eyes of a common housefly are a thousand times more marvelous than the greatest of human inventions.

Creation will *astonish* you whether you view it close up or far away—with a wide-angle lens or with a magnifying glass. All of creation is impressive beyond words in every dimension and in every detail—and it fairly screams out the wisdom and glory of its Maker.

And God created it all out of *nothing*. What is "nothing"? You can't conceive of it. You probably think of empty space,

but even that is something. Spurgeon said, "You have never yet grasped the idea of nothing. The eye cannot see it. . . . the eye could not look on nothing. It would be blinded. Nothing is a thing which the senses cannot grasp, and yet it is out of this awful nothing that God made the sun and moon and stars and all things that are."

That's what Scripture says. This vast, incredible universe is the work of God, the Creator, and His intention from one end of the universe to the other is to show us some of His glory. All of creation is one massive display of divine glory that no one can possibly overlook. A universe full of truth about God is right there, in your face, all the time, assaulting all the human senses with undeniable facts that God wants us to know about himself.

I simply don't have time to recite a catalogue of the wonders of creation. There are whole books full of information about creatures with incredible features that defy the theory that all these species evolved by chance. The point is that Scripture says the truth of creation is obvious, and people are without excuse when they try to suppress that truth.

By the way, the psalmist writes *frequently* about how God is revealed in creation. I quoted from Psalm 19 already. The first half of that psalm is an anthem about the glory of God in nature. **"The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork."** Psalm 8 takes up the same theme, in

a prayer addressed to the Creator: "**O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens.**" That's Psalm 8:1. It's one of David's psalms. As He observes the glory of God in creation, he is smitten with a sense of his own unworthiness. He writes, "**When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?**" The vastness of the heavens makes him feel his own insignificance.

Imagine if David knew what *we* know about how big the universe is. He was limited to what he could see with the naked eye. We've got the Hubble Space telescope that can see further than you could possibly imagine.

In late 2009, NASA pointed the Hubble telescope at a tiny remote spot in far-off space where there are no visible stars and exposed its camera for 48 hours with infrared light filters. What appeared in the photograph was a large field of galaxies—not stars, but galaxies (some of them bigger than the milky way). Scientists say they are eighty-one billion-trillion miles away. I can't conceive of a distance that large—and neither can you. That's 81 with 108 zeros trailing. Traveling at the normal speed of light, it would take you thirteen and a half billion years to get there—so if you're going there, better pack a lunch.

The vastness of the universe puts our relative insignificance in perspective, doesn't it?

And yet, as David says, the glory of God is revealed in the human creature in a unique and particular way. Psalm 8:5-6: **"Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet."**

Of all the creatures on earth and all the galaxies in the heavens, none gives a more articulate and obvious revelation of God's glory than man, who was made in God's very image.

And that's the second category of theological truths creation teaches us:

2. THE FALLEN GLORY OF HUMANITY

Humanity bears the stamp of God's likeness. No other creature—not even the highest archangel—was made in God's image. We can *see* the image of God imprinted on the human soul in humanity's unique moral and spiritual attributes—those things that set us apart from the animals.

For example, the human intellect is uniquely capable of self-reflection. We're creative. We are moved by beauty. We speak a variety of complex languages. Our moral instinct (that innate sense of right and wrong) is unparalleled in the animal kingdom. We have a conscience that declares our guilt when we do wrong. And no other creature manifests

anything like the human craving for communion with God. Animals don't practice religion of any kind.

And yet, it is clear that the human race is fallen. People do evil things. *All* people do. Romans 3:10: "**None is righteous, no, not one. . . . All have turned aside; together they have become worthless.**" Sin is a plague on humanity, and you can see that in the headlines at the Drudge Report every day.

Furthermore, as the apostle says in the verse immediately preceding our text, Romans 1:18, "**[Fallen] men, [in] their unrighteousness suppress the truth**" they see in nature. They willfully disclaim and deny what they ought to be able to see with their own eyes. They try to conceal it from their own consciences. And they intentionally pretend it isn't even there. But, Paul says, that is no excuse (v. 19): "**For what can be known about God is *plain* to them, because God has shown it to them. 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.**"

Notice verse 19: "**Knowledge of God is obvious *within* them.**" That's a literal rendering of verse 19. The knowledge of God is *within* them (not just "among" them or "around" them). And in the words of the ESV, it is "**plain to them.**" Verse 21: "**They knew God.**"

This means vital knowledge of God is innate in the human mind—imprinted there by the Creator Himself. You were

born with knowledge already in your mind. A totally blank mind would be like a computer without a program. It would have no means of interpreting or cataloguing data. We *must* know something in order to make sense of anything.

Where does that original knowledge come from? Here is your answer: God put it there. Some rudimentary knowledge is innate in the human heart, and its centerpiece is an awareness of the God who put it there. It's not a complete and comprehensive understanding of all truth about God, obviously—but it certainly includes some sense of right and wrong, good and evil, justice and injustice.

God puts knowledge, including some knowledge of himself, in the human heart. Elihu was speaking truth in Job 32:8 when he said, "**It is the spirit in man, the breath of the Almighty, that makes him understand.**" When God breathed the breath of life into Adam, He gave us a basic moral compass, and (according to Romans 2:15) a conscience that either accuses or excuses us. Romans 2:15 expressly says that God's moral law is inscribed in some fashion on the human heart. A set of fundamental spiritual truths was engraved on our souls at creation. It's not exhaustive knowledge, but it's enough to remove the excuse of total ignorance—enough to make us aware of God and His glory. Verse 19: "**What can be known about God is [obvious *within*] them.**"

At the same time, there is a tendency in every human heart to suppress or ignore that knowledge. That's the proof

that the human race is fallen. The doctrine of original sin is not the most popular dogma in Christian theology, but it is the one vital doctrine that is vividly proved by empirical evidence. Everyone sins. Human history is a story filled with wars and atrocities and monstrous horrors that are the fruit of our fallenness.

Furthermore, we are *conscious* of our own sin. We feel guilt. We sense our accountability to Someone higher than us. We try to suppress the guilt feelings, and some people are amazingly successful at that, but suppressing guilt only makes a person worse, not more well-adjusted. Someone who feels no guilt whatsoever is a psychopath.

So we are sufficiently aware of the human dilemma by the light of nature alone. Humanity is a fallen race. Time doesn't permit me to be long-winded about this, so I hope you see the point.

Let me move now to the third category of truths we learn from creation. The order and reality of created things shows us not only the magnificent glory of God, and the fallen glory of humanity. Here's category number 3. Nature shows us—

3. THE AWFUL CURSE OF SIN.

Again, time doesn't permit me to be verbose here, but I don't need to say much about this anyway. There is ample evidence in nature that something has utterly devastated creation—especially in the realm of human activity. Anything humanity touches is ruined.

Skeptics and scoffers will try to blame God (or His absence) for anything that goes wrong: "*Where was God when the latest catastrophe occurred?*" or, "*If God is such a loving and masterful Creator, why did He create viruses and mosquitos?*" "*Why do things break down, and people die?*" "*Why is this world so full of pain, and toil, and tragedy?*"

Scripture, of course, answers those questions definitively. Creation is cursed because of humanity's sin. That's Genesis 3. But the point here is that the reality of evil and the effects of the curse are perfectly obvious in nature. In the words of Romans 8:22, "**the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together.**" *We* groan. Human life generally starts with a cry and ends with a groan. Everyone dies. Everyone experiences deep sorrow. Trouble defines the human condition. Job 5:7: "**Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward.**" Something is clearly wrong.

And we can tell (both intuitively from what our conscience tells us, and experientially from observing the laws of the universe—we can tell) that whatever is wrong has *something* to do with human sin. Even the materialistic

atheists, fretting about climate change, are certain what's wrong in the world is humanity's fault.

So even the awful curse of sin is obvious in when we look at creation.

God's majestic glory; man's fallen glory; and sin's awful curse—all of that is loudly proclaimed by the things that are made, if you have ears to listen.

On the other hand, the good news—the *answer* to the human dilemma—is revealed only through special revelation. God gave us His Word, the Bible, to show the way of salvation and redemption from the curse. And then He sent His Son (the ultimate, final self-revelation of God, Jesus Christ) to verify and fulfill everything Scripture ever promised. That's not just "special" revelation; that is perfect revelation.

Christ lived a perfect life, navigating this cursed world without ever once being defiled by sin Himself. Then He died to pay sin's penalty, offering an atonement more than sufficient for all the sins of everyone who will ever believe. Therefore He offers eternal life in a redeemed universe—a new heaven and earth untainted by sin and uncorrupted by the curse—to those who confess their fallenness, repent, and trust in Him alone as Lord and Savior.

That is the gospel in a nutshell. That's the truth that all nature ultimately points to and prompts us to look into. If

creation is the foundation of all truth, the gospel is the central truth to which all other truth leads, and Christ Himself is the very pinnacle and incarnation of *all* truth. If you have not yet embraced Him as "**the way, and the truth, and the life,**" my prayer for you is that God will open your eyes to see, and that your entire life and worldview will be transformed by the truth of Christ.