

Christian Education

Education in the Arts and Sciences

Lesson #10 for December 5, 2020

Scriptures: Romans 1:18-21; Psalm 19:1-6; 96:9; Genesis 3:6; 1 Timothy 6; Proverbs 1; Job 38.

1. How do you understand the following words? “The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork.” (Psalm 19:1, *New King James Version**)

Psalm 19:1: How clearly the sky reveals God’s glory!

How plainly it shows what he has done!—American Bible Society. (1992).
*The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation** (2nd ed., Psalm 19:1). New
York: American Bible Society.

2. Does looking out at night into a starry heaven say anything to you about God? Does looking about us at our world tell us of God’s handiwork? What do beautiful and fragrant flowers and trees tell us about God?
3. The arts and sciences are considered to be an important part of education. So, what is the role of the biblical perspective in education? Does reading a text at the beginning of a class and then offering a short prayer make the class into one that is based on biblical principles? How should teachers integrate their understanding of God, of creation, and of God’s role in our lives and in the world into every aspect of their teaching?
4. Let us be honest. As human beings, we cannot fully comprehend what it means to have an omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent God. Do we understand what it means when we say that our very lives—every heartbeat and every breath—only happen because of God’s power? If God chooses to make a world that operates according to orderly laws and then scientists study those laws, does that give the scientists permission to leave the Creator and Sustainer of the universe out of their thinking? Is that just the way it is? Or, is that the work of God?
5. Let us think of some examples of God’s activity in our world. A human baby develops from a fertilized egg of microscopic size; and it becomes a living, breathing human being. And it is interesting to notice how the mother’s body changes to accommodate the pregnancy. There are hormonal changes; there are physical changes. The abdomen swells right out in front of her. As she approaches months 7, 8, and 9, it is impossible to hide the fact that she is bearing a child. Think of how these changes in her life prepare her for being a mother. Is that why Mary spent the first few months of her pregnancy at the home of Elizabeth?
6. For a child who for months or years has been waited for and prayed for, think how exciting it is to watch it grow! God could have made the whole growth process somehow be hidden away; but, this is so much better! Look at Scripture that talks about God’s creative power.

Romans 1:18-21: ¹⁸ God’s anger is revealed from heaven against all the sin and evil of the people whose evil ways prevent the truth from being known. ¹⁹ God punishes them, because what can be known about God is plain to them, for God himself made it plain. ²⁰ Ever since God created the world, his invisible qualities, both his eternal power and his divine nature, have been clearly seen; they are perceived in the things that God has made. So those people have no excuse at all! ²¹ They know God, but they do not give him the honour

that belongs to him, nor do they thank him. Instead, their thoughts have become complete nonsense, and their empty minds are filled with darkness.—*Good News Bible*.*

7. What does God's anger have to do with His creative power?
8. **Remember that God's wrath is simply His turning away in loving disappointment from those who do not want Him anyway, thus leaving them to the inevitable and awful consequences of their own destructive choices.** (Compare Psalm 19:1-6 and Nehemiah 9:6.)
9. Think of all that our world has been through since creation. Did God design our world to withstand the ravages of a worldwide flood? Clearly, He knew it was coming! And think of what human beings are doing that impacts our environment today. Is it possible that some of the human-caused effects on the environment eventually will lead to some of the plagues?
10. Education, especially at the higher levels in our day, is totally dominated by the idea that we evolved after the Big Bang and, then, from random forces that have led all the way to where we are now. According to that theory, the universe began with the explosion of what some say was a single atom but most say was a very small but extremely dense mass. From where did that first atom or first mass come? Then, they say, that explosion produced gases; and those gases coalesced or clumped together to form the large bodies in the universe. Some think our world was formed when a massive piece of rock collided with a large meteorite and heated up the world until we ended up with the shape and size that we now have. Someone has pointed out the fact that if you could shrink our world to the size of a billiard ball, it would be smoother than a billiard ball! Does that sound like something that might have happened as the result of two massive heavenly bodies crashing together?
11. Science is based on the idea that any truth must be testable in the laboratory. The "gold standard" is that it must be clearly understood and repeatable in other laboratories to confirm it as a scientific fact. So, how does the one-time creation of our world and the subsequent world-wide flood fit into that scenario? Obviously, it does not. However, neither does the Big Bang. So, how should Christians respond to those who believe that the Big Bang is the only possible explanation for what we find in our world today? Ask evolutionists if they believe in George Washington?
12. If God did not make those fantastic flowers with their wonderful smell, how could they have resulted from mere chance? Why is it that birds that are not as colorful tend to have the best songs? Why are male birds usually attractive?
13. Read Psalm 96:9 (*NKJV*): "Oh, worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness! Tremble before Him, all the earth." So, what do we mean when we say, "The beauty of holiness"? Is it true that "beauty is in the eye of the beholder"? Think of the incredible process that takes place every time you see something and recognize it. Who made the eyes that see and the nerves that carry those impulses to the back of the brain where the images from the two eyes are integrated to give us a 3-D picture and recognition and identification of the object? And how does that mental image then get interpreted by the brain as being beautiful? Or, not beautiful? And if there is still so much of beauty left in our world, what must it have been like when it was first created? Proverbs 20:12 (*GNB**) says: "The LORD has given us eyes to see with and ears to listen with." Who designed the colorful sunset?
14. So, if we recognize that it is God who is the Creator of all that beauty, doesn't that tell us

something important about God?

God would have His children appreciate His works and delight in the simple, quiet beauty with which He has adorned our earthly home. He is a lover of the beautiful, and **above all that is outwardly attractive He loves beauty of character**; He would have us cultivate purity and simplicity, the quiet graces of the flowers.—Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ** 85.3.†

15. But, we need to recognize, and we all probably do, that not every beautiful thing is pure and holy.

Genesis 3:6: The woman saw how beautiful the tree was and how good its fruit would be to eat, and she thought how wonderful it would be to become wise. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to her husband, and he also ate it.—*Good News Bible*.*

Proverbs 6:25: Don't be tempted by their beauty; don't be trapped by their flirting eyes.—*Good News Bible*.*

Proverbs 31:30: Charm is deceptive and beauty disappears, but a woman who honours the LORD should be praised.—*Good News Bible*.*

16. Unfortunately, God's enemy, Satan, has done everything he possibly can to destroy, distort, or exploit what God has made. Think of what the advertising agencies have done with virtually anything that is beautiful.
17. The human body is one of God's most beautiful creations; but, think of all the ways that beauty has been abused for the purpose of advertising just about anything you can imagine!
18. Would it be correct to suggest that the Devil, working through human agencies, has created innumerable experts in error?
19. How many businesses in our day, including businesses on the Internet, are misusing what God has created as beautiful to mislead and tempt people to go astray? Consider some of the ways in which people have been led astray in the past.

1 Timothy 6:9-10: ⁹But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and are caught in the trap of many foolish and harmful desires, which pull them down to ruin and destruction. ¹⁰**For the love of money is a source of all kinds of evil. Some have been so eager to have it that they have wandered away from the faith and have broken their hearts with many sorrows.**—*Good News Bible*.*†

20. Paul went on to encourage us to strive for righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, and gentleness. Run your best in the race of faith, he said, and you will win eternal life. We are warned against placing our trust in riches. Instead, we should be rich in good works. James told us that by doing good works, we can store up treasure in heaven.
21. Paul ended up in 1 Timothy 6:20 (*GNB**), talking about what some people “wrongly call ‘Knowledge.’” What was he talking about? Think of all the things that people have believed fervently down through the generations that have turned out to be completely wrong.
22. For thousands of years people believed that the earth was the center of the universe and that all the other celestial bodies rotated around us. We now know that was completely false knowledge. Some even believed that the earth is flat!

23. Evolutionary science today posits the idea that life began billions of years ago by chance with no God involved and with no purpose behind it. So, how should this information impact Christian education?

24. **For a great lecture on this subject see James M. Tour, Ph.D.:**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OYHHBIZF8o&ab_channel=DrJamesTour

25. Proverbs 1 talks about wisdom and foolishness. Verse 7 (*GNB**) tells us: “To have knowledge, you must first have reverence for the LORD. Stupid people have no respect for wisdom and refuse to learn.” Solomon went on to describe the folly of people who think that robbery is fun and hope to make themselves rich by doing so. And he concluded that robbery always claims the life of the robber.

26. Solomon went on to describe how wisdom and truth are all around us, constantly seeking to convince us of their importance. But, he said that if you choose evil, you will experience bad consequences. Wisdom cannot come to your aid at that point. But, if you choose to follow biblical wisdom, you will be rewarded. You will have nothing of which to be afraid.

27. So, where would you go to find wisdom in our day? Wisdom must include a correct understanding of the role of God not only in creation but also in our daily lives. It must include an understanding of our total dependence upon God every day. If we recognize God as the source of all wisdom, we will be able to distinguish between right and wrong, good and evil, truth and error. Evolutionists have a hard time explaining how to deal with moral issues. In the past, there have been some great scientists who have turned their knowledge and information to very evil causes. Think of those who invented better ways to kill people. Some people want to do away with the very idea of evil and say the Devil does not exist!

One Nobel Prize winner, an atheist, a man who studies the universe and the physical forces behind it, wrote: “The more the universe seems comprehensible, the more it also seems pointless.” What should this tell us about how knowledge, in and of itself, can not only be meaningless but, even worse, lead to gross error?—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Wednesday, December 2.

28. Read Job 38. This is a very interesting chapter talking about all that God did to create our world. It is very significant to notice verse 7 (*GNB**): “In the dawn of that day the stars sang together, and the heavenly beings shouted for joy.” But, notice all the other details about how God set boundaries on the ocean. He produced water that expands slightly as it gets colder between 4° and 0°C so that ice floats instead of sinking. If ice sank, life as we know it would be impossible! Job 38 goes on to describe many details about the sea, about darkness and light, and about snow, hail, and rain. Then, the author of Job turned to space and talked about the Pleiades and Orion. He challenged us to understand the laws that control these heavenly bodies. Then, he asked if humans can control the clouds and tell them when it is time to rain? Can we find food for lions?

29. There are many scientists in our world today who believe that, as deists believed in the past, the world carries on, following laws set in motion long ago by God but without God intervening in any way since the beginning.

Many teach that matter possesses vital power—that certain properties are imparted to matter, and it is then left to act through its own inherent energy; and that the operations of nature are conducted in harmony with fixed laws,

with which God Himself cannot interfere. This is false science, and is not sustained by the word of God. Nature is the servant of her Creator.... Nature testifies of an intelligence, a presence, an active energy, that works in and through her laws. **There is in nature the continual working of the Father and the Son. Christ says, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."** John 5:17.—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets** 114.4.†

30. How should we respond when a scientist discovers something of an enormous significance, beauty, and intricacy, and then, suggests it all happened by chance? Many people have pointed out the numerous very precisely balanced laws that make it possible for life to exist on this earth. There are many scientists who have demonstrated that there are certain very fixed boundaries to random mutation and natural selection.
31. By contrast, many scientists claim that a supernatural Creator is unscientific! They want to, somehow, place God in the laboratory where they can test Him! Can the Big Bang theory of origins be tested in the laboratory?
32. A creationist must be cautious when talking to evolutionists. When Christians talk to evolutionists, it is important not to allow the evolutionists to get away with claiming that they have science and all that we have is religion or faith. We must demand that if they want to talk about science, we will compare our science with their science; and we will be speaking on equal terms. If they want to talk about religion, they can talk about their philosophies, and we will talk about our God!
33. So, **what does the Bible say about God sustaining us on a daily basis?**

Acts 17:25-28: ²⁵ “Nor does he need anything that we can supply by working for him, since it is he himself who gives life and breath and everything else to everyone. ²⁶From one human being he created all races on earth and made them live throughout the whole earth. He himself fixed beforehand the exact times and the limits of the places where they would live. ²⁷He did this so that they would look for him, and perhaps find him as they felt about for him. Yet God is actually not far from any one of us; ²⁸as someone has said, ‘In him we live and move and exist.’

It is as some of your poets have said,

‘We too are his children.’”—*Good News Bible*.*

Every pulsation of the heart is a rebound from the touch of the finger of God. He watches over us by day, and under his wings we find shelter by night. His preserving care is over us, whether we wake or sleep. He is as a sentinel to guard us from Satan’s power, or we should be taken captive by him. Jesus is our constant friend.—Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald**, December 2, 1890, par. 15.†

34. Two reasons exist why science, which gets so many things right, gets origins so wrong: first, science, which studies the natural world, must look only to the natural world for answers; second, science assumes that the laws of nature must remain constant. Yet, both these are wrong when it comes to origins. Take the first one, which requires natural causes for natural events. That’s fine for hurricane tracking, but it is worse than worthless for origins that start out with “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (*Gen. 1:1, NKJV*). What can science, which denies the supernatural in origins, teach us

about origins that were totally supernatural?

And the constancy of nature? This seems to make sense, except that Romans 5:12—"Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned" (NKJV)—presupposes a natural environment discontinuous, and qualitatively different, from anything that science now confronts. A world in which death did not exist is radically different from anything we can study today, and to assume they were very similar when they weren't also will lead to error.

Hence, science gets origins wrong because it denies two crucial aspects of the Creation: the supernatural force behind it, and the radical physical discontinuity between the original creation and what's before us now.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Friday, December 4.^{†§}

35. We know that Christ could have come to this earth as a brilliant scientist and revealed to us hundreds of scientific facts, many of which we may not yet have discovered. But, He did not. Instead, He trained as a carpenter in a humble carpenter's shop. What does that tell us about God?

Nature is God's 24-hours-a-day, 3-D, multimedia, stereophonic revelation of Himself. It requires no paid subscriptions, no streaming devices, and is everywhere and always accessible (*Ps. 19:1*).—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 132.[§]

36. As a branch of science, biology tries to rule out God's creation as an explanation for anything. But, if we are willing to consider the biblical record, God created our world without any natural death involved. Apoptosis, the process by which cells are programmed to die and be replaced, is an essential part of biology now; but, it was not a part of the original creation of our world. However, God, knowing what was coming, created our world so that we could reproduce and fill the earth with human beings and also study His behavior in sustaining our world as if it were a natural science. For those who are honest with history, there have been so many mistakes made in scientific investigations down through the years that we should be very cautious about jumping on any new "truth" or new "discovery" with all fours!

Here are two examples: the first, in which science should have taken a bow to the church but didn't, and the second, in which the church was the scapegoat for a more general mistake. (The following two examples are taken in part from John C. Lennox, *God's Undertaker: Has Science Buried God?* [Oxford: Lion, 2009], pp. 24, 68.)

1. Early Christian thinkers (Augustine, Irenaeus, Aquinas), relying on the biblical account, agreed that the universe had a beginning and that God created it. However, for much of the modern scientific era, the consensus was that the universe was infinite in both age and extent. When atheists debated Christians on the existence of God, apologists would use the origin of the universe as evidence of God's existence. The atheists responded with the "fact" that the universe was infinite, thereby undermining that argument. Fast-forward to the late twentieth century, and the consensus among scientists is that the universe indeed did have a beginning. But some were reluctant to admit it. Why? Because it gave Christians a justification for their creationist beliefs. Let that sink in for a moment. The scientific evidence,

such as red shift in the light from distant galaxies and background microwave radiation, supports the theory that the universe had a beginning. This supposition aligns with the biblical account. But scientists were resistant to this conclusion because it gave too much ground to religion. Wouldn't it be nice for the scientific community to play fair and simply say, "We blew it, but those Bible-believing creationist Christians got it right"?

2. The "conflict thesis" that says that religion and science are fundamentally at loggerheads with each other gets much of its popular steam from stories such as Galileo's. That such stories are given dramatic headlines only reinforces the thesis, headlines such as: "Galileo, Secular Scientist Extraordinaire Versus the Church, the Institutional Incarnation of Unscientific Religious Dogma." Of course, Galileo was right about heliocentrism, and the medieval church was wrong, but the narrative is skewed claiming that this was a clear-cut case of science versus religion and that science won. The fact is, Galileo believed in God and the Bible and did so for his whole life. His initial trouble was not with the church but with the academy. In a letter in 1615, he claims that the academic professors who opposed him tried to influence Roman Catholic Church authorities to speak out against him. Galileo's scientific arguments were a threat to the reigning Aristotelianism of the academy. Rome aligned itself with a worldview that was supported by the Italian philosophers and professors. **This understanding doesn't absolve the Roman Catholic Church of its treatment of Galileo, but it does show that Rome was simply in harmony with the reigning academic paradigm of the day.**

To use Galileo as an illustration of science's victory over religion is to scapegoat the medieval church and distort history. "And though the story has been gleefully transformed into the archetypal example of ignorant religionists fighting intellectual progress, the reality remains more complicated. It wasn't just the stark binary of religion versus science; the Galileo disaster is an example of the tyranny of dogmatic science and scientific tradition over every other means of acquiring knowledge.

"'The ignoble affair,' wrote Gerhard and Michael Hasel, 'associated with the famous trial of Galileo in the seventeenth century could have been avoided had the church's theological consultants recognized that their interpretation of certain Bible texts was conditioned by tradition based on the cosmology of the pagan mathematician-geographer Ptolemy.' It wasn't just tradition but one that arose from the acceptance of prevailing scientific dogma."—Clifford Goldstein, *Baptizing the Devil: Evolution and the Seduction of Christianity* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2017), p. 47.

These two examples show that the battle between faith and science is a straw man in many respects. The idea that big bang cosmology is a *de facto* concession that creationists were right in the first place is virtually unknown today. Now, the big bang theory for the origin of the universe is used against believers as an argument against the existence of God. Many lay creationists don't realize that their victory trophy (i.e., that the universe does have a beginning) has been snatched out of their hand and is being used to figuratively clobber them again.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 133-134.^{†§}

37. Christians need to make it clear that many of the greatest scientists of the past have been dedicated Christians. Isaac Newton wrote several books about his Christian beliefs!

Traditionally, there have been five branches of philosophy. Those branches and their objects of study are:

1. Logic: ideal thinking
2. Ethics: ideal behavior
3. Politics: ideal social organization
4. Metaphysics: ultimate reality
5. Aesthetics: ideal form/beauty

Though many of these subjects can be heard by turning on the radio, reflections on beauty have become rare. Primarily because of the cultural and moral relativism of our age, beauty is considered simply a subjective preference. Deep down, though, we know that this assertion cannot be true. In fact, just as we know that there are bedrock concepts of the “good” that are not relative to time, culture, or place, “beauty” is the same. As one philosopher put it, “Beauty is goodness made manifest to the senses.”—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 135.

38. So, how has evolution impacted our world? How does an evolutionist or an atheist explain why humans—and even babies—are beautiful?
39. Andrew Fletcher, a famous musician from England, once said: “Let me make the songs of a nation, and I care not who makes its laws.”—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 135.
40. How much are young people impacted by the music to which they listen? What is the general attitude toward the Bible and religion held by secular scholars in universities in places like the United States? **What can we do to teach the truth to our young people who attend such schools and teach it so clearly, forcefully, and convincingly that they will not adopt those pagan teachings?**

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