



God and the Universe

FaithBuilder 4 | Lesson 2 | Lord

Lesson Overview

1. Watch a Video

Watch *Powers of Ten Ultimate Zoom* at bitly.com/Pwr10UltimateZoom (5min).

2. Discussion

Can we see God by looking at the natural universe?

3. Watch a Video

Watch *How a Seed Resembles God* at bitly.com/SeedGod (1min).

4. Discussion

Can we see God by looking at the natural universe?

New Church Concept Creation

God first limited His infinity by substances sent out from Himself. From these arose the first sphere encompassing Him, which constitutes the Sun of the spiritual world. Afterwards, by means of that Sun, He formed the rest of the spheres, even to the last, which consists of inactive matter. In this way, by means of degrees He completed step by step the finite state of the world. *True Christian Religion* 33

Introduce the video *Powers of Ten Ultimate Zoom*

Many look at the beauty, order and enormous size of the created universe and do not see proof that there is a God. Others look at the same universe and say that it confirms their belief that there is a God, and that He created all things. We are going to watch a video that starts out looking at life from a human perspective, and then zooms out into the universe and back in again to a microscopic level. As you watch the video, think about where God fits into the picture.

Watch *Powers of Ten Ultimate Zoom* (5min) online at bitly.com/Pwr10UltimateZoom. (Enter bitly link into the search bar at the top of your screen.)

Discuss

Choose questions for discussion.

1. Many people look at creation and think that if God exists, they should be able to see Him there. Is it possible to see that God exists by observing the things He created? Why or why not?
2. Where do created things come from? How does God create? (See *Creation* sidebar, on left.)
3. How is God *in* the things He created? Are we part of God? Or, are we separate from God? (See *People and God*, p. 2.)

The Writings for the New Church give helpful answers to these questions. They tell us that if we want to understand the relationship between spiritual ideas and the natural world, we have to adopt the right mindset. We have to examine natural things from a spiritual perspective. The following passage helps us see why.

When people say that nature exists in its own right, they are relying on their physical senses and have darkness in matters of the spirit. They are thinking from the eye and are unable to think from the understanding. Thinking from the eye closes understanding, but thinking from understanding opens the eye.... People thinking from nature cannot but think about life except as something volatile that vanishes into thin air, no other thought about love and wisdom, and no thought whatever about the fact that they are the source of everything in nature.... The only source of nature's functions is life, and the only source of their sequence and pattern is love and wisdom. Forms, though, are vessels of functions. This means that if we look only at forms, no trace is visible of the life in nature, let alone of love and wisdom, and therefore of God. See *Divine Love and Wisdom* 46

So in order to see God in nature we have to think from a *spiritual* perspective. God created the world from His Divine love by means of His Divine wisdom.

Here's a way to think about love and wisdom on a personal level. We experience love as the desire to *do* something—say reach out to a distant friend and make him or her happy. Wisdom is using the practical knowledge we have to write a message and send it to the person. We have reached our goal to do something nice by using love (desire) and wisdom (structured knowledge) together.

Watch a Video

Watch *How a Seed Resembles God* at bitly.com/SeedGod (1min). (Enter bitly link in the browser bar at the top of your screen.) This video talks about creation from a New Church perspective. While you are watching, think about the differences in the way creation is presented.

Discuss

Choose questions for discussion.

1. What underlying assumption did the presenter make in the video?
2. What message did the presenter take away from observing generations of plants?
3. Can you think of other examples in nature that show the Lord's infinity?
4. Do you think that this message could prove to someone that God exists? Why or why not?
5. New Church teachings reveal something called the *affirmative and negative principles* (see sidebar at right). People who think from a *negative* principle believe that only things that can be proved by science or through the experience of their own senses are true. People who think from an *affirmative* principle believe what the Lord teaches in the Word and see everything else in the light of what is taught there. What does knowing this tell you about the ability to reason with someone who does not believe in God?

People and God

The Lord, who is God of the universe, is uncreated and infinite, while people and angels are created and finite. Because the Lord is uncreated and infinite, He is the underlying being itself which is called Jehovah, and is life itself.

No one can be created directly from the Divine, because the Divine is one and indivisible. Rather he must be created out of elements already created and finite, so formed that the Divine can be present in them.

Because people and angels are such creations, they are recipients of life. Consequently, if anyone allows himself to think that he is not a recipient of life, but is life, he thinks that he is God. See *Divine Love and Wisdom 4*

New Church Concept Affirmative Principle

There are two basic attitudes of mind from which people think, the negative and the affirmative. People who think from a negative attitude believe nothing unless they are convinced by rational considerations, facts, and sensory evidence. People who think from an affirmative attitude believe that things are true because the Lord has said so in the Word and who thus have faith in the Lord. People who adopt the negative attitude towards anything in the Word say in their hearts that they are willing to believe when persuaded on rational grounds and by facts. But people like this never believe, not even if convinced by the evidence of their physical senses, for they would always be producing new reasonings against such things. People who adopt the affirmative attitude, that is, who believe that things are true because the Lord has said so, are being confirmed all the time by rational considerations and by facts, and even by sensory evidence, and their ideas are being enlightened and are strengthened by these. For a person has light from no other source than by means of the things of reason and memory, and such is the way with everyone.

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