

Examining the Cosmos

Session 1

God's Two-Part Harmony: Scripture & Nature

Recommended Reading

Hugh Ross, *A Matter of Days* (chapters 1 thru 8), (Colorado Springs, Co, NAVPRESS, 2004) 13-110.

Scriptural Outline

Biblical statements regarding the ancient age of the earth and its features:

• 2 Peter 3:5; Deuteronomy 33:15; Proverbs 8:2; Genesis 1:1-5; Habakkuk 3:6; Judges 5:21; Psalm 68:33.

Interpreting the Bible and nature:

God's Revelation Human Interpretations

Facts of Nature → Science

Words of the Bible → Theology

Biblical statements regarding what the record of nature tells us about God and His character:

• Psalms 19:1-3; 89:35-37; 33:5; 97:6; 50:6; 89:2; Isaiah 45:8; Jeremiah 51:15; Romans 1:18-32.

A layman's guide to discerning good science

1. Is this piece of "evidence" a conclusion based on data, or is it a worldview interpretation of a particular model?
2. Is this new discovery a fine-tuning of an existing measurement (almost always the case), or a wholesale revision of a previous conclusion (very seldom the case)?
3. Is the issue under discussion part of a well-established body of evidence supported by observational evidence (e.g., "big bang" model for the origin of the universe) or a theoretical hypothesis without observational support (e.g., "life in outer space" or "Earth is located at the center of a white hole")?
4. Is this phenomenon something that is poorly understood and/or extremely complex?
5. How many independent lines of data verify a particular scientific conclusion?
6. What is the quality of evidence that is being used to support a theory? Has this evidence been evaluated by scientists from various worldview perspectives, or is this evidence only being promoted by Christians? Has it been published in any peer-reviewed scientific journal(s)?

7. Is there solid, well-understood evidence that is being avoided because it conflicts with a priori worldview assumptions?
8. Does this “evidence” selectively exclude the larger picture of the scientific record?
9. What are the credentials of the scientists doing the study? Do they have solid academic training from accredited institutions? If not, have their findings been verified by people who do?

For further study...

- David Hagopian, ed., *The Genesis Debate* (Mission Viejo, CA: Crux, 2001).
- “Report of the Creation Study Committee,” PCANews.com (Atlanta, GA: Administrative Committee of the Presbyterian Church in America, July 6, 2000).
- “Westminster Theological Seminary and the Days of Creation: A Brief Statement,” www.wts.edu/news/creation.html (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Theological Seminary, 1999).
- Wayne Grudem, “Creation: Why, how and when did God create the universe?” *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 262-314.
- Millard J. Erickson, “God’s Originating Work: Creation,” *Christian Theology*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1991), 365-386. (Note: Erickson does not define the “Progressive Creation” position in the same way as Reasons To Believe. RTB does not promote any form of biological evolution in the animal or human realm through natural processes.)

Session 1 ~ Study Topic One "Science & The Bible, Fully Compatible".

General revelation; understanding that God has revealed Himself thru his laws of physics and in nature. There is total and complete compatibility between true scientific facts and the Bible. God’s existence can be seen by all people, at all times, thru history, thru observations in Nature and even within us. Our internal nature, our morality, our conciseness, Gods laws are written in our heart

Science, facts of nature and God’s word, Theology, are both true; INTERPRETATION, is the key. God’s laws and the laws of physics do not change.

As we reach out in evangelism, using foundational scripture verses such as:

Gen.1:1 In the beginning God created

Col.1:16-17 For by Him all things were created

Psalms 8:3-5 When I consider your heavens

Psalms19:1-4 The heavens declare the glory of God

Rom.1:19-20 God has made it plain

Psalms 119:160 All your words are true

And as we also quote from famous persons, not just believers, but also seekers:

Frank H. Shu, Professor of Astronomy, Univ. of Cal. Berkley

Let us summarize in words, the above mathematical deduction. In the beginning, radiation must have dominated over the ordinary forms of matter, not counting neutrinos. The early universe must have been exceedingly bright, This deduction of modern astronomy is, interestingly enough, in accord with the biblical account in Gen1:1-3 So, modern cosmology affirms, in the beginning there was light.ⁱ

Professor S. Weinberg:

Life as we know it would be impossible if any one of several physical quantities had slightly different values. This constant has to do with the energy of the big bang. Weinberg quantifies the tuning as one part in 10^{120} .ⁱⁱ

Roger Penrose, Professor of mathematics, Oxford University

Penrose finds the laws of nature tuned for life. This balance of nature's Laws is so perfect and so unlikely to have occurred by chance that he avers an intelligent CREATOR must have chosen them.ⁱⁱⁱ

Paul Davies, physicist

It is as if we were written into the equations of the universe at its inception, built into the scheme of things in a very basic way.^{iv}

Niles Eldridge, Paleontologist

Paleontologists and theologians agree that the record of life on earth reveals a sequence of evidence for a punctuated formation of life, appearance of new species with no direct connection between new species and the species that predated them. The so-called missing links are still missing. The pattern we were told to find for the past 120 years does not exist.^v

With the power of the Holy Spirit, God can use His general revelation proofs to allow the hearts of those hearing these words to open and allow His Special Revelation to convert and show the need for Jesus Christ as personal savior.

We need to understand and convey to others that the God of the universe wants to be personal, and the God of our lives, for all eternity.

ⁱⁱ The Physical Universe, An Introduction to Astronomy, 1982, Frank H. Shu

ⁱⁱ S.Weinberg, Life in the Universe, Scientific American, October 1994

iii R. Penrose, *The Emperor's New Mind*, Penguin Books, New York, 1991

iv P. Davies, *The Mind of God*: Simon & Schuster, New York, 1992

v Eldredge and Gould, in *Models in Paleobiology*, ed. T. Schaff, pp 82-115, 1977

Session 1 ~ Study Topic 2

"Have secular scientists conspired to force evolution on humanity?"

It is a sad fact that many scientists are not Christians. Often it may be because they have devoted their entire life to ridged, highly focused scientific situations. They may not have taken the time to consider theological issues.

In no way has the secular scientific community conspired to dupe the general public into believing in evolution.

I believe that science, when properly interpreted and understood is compatible to and substantiates what the Bible claims.

- Albert Einstein's facts of relativity prove that the universe had a beginning.
- Hubble's law shows that red shift is real and that most galaxies are moving away from each other
- P.J.E. Peebles *Principles of Physical Cosmology* tells us that our universe has expanded approximately by 10^{12} times larger now than at its inception.
- Roger Lewin and Robert Foley, *Principles of Human Evolution*, 2004, In their chapters on mitochondrial DNA types, state that humans probably came from only one source, at one location, and that EVE'S DNA passes thru a bottleneck and is traceable further back than man's. Also, genetic evidence discussed in this book has contributed to the abandonment of the idea that Neanderthals are ancestors of modern humans.

So, secular scientists are often our best and only reliable source for facts to substantiate the Biblical record.

It is a positive practice that RTB's position is to work with secular scientists; however, discernment is always necessary. We must always apply a guide to INTERPERTATION.

In simple sciences, such as mathematics, astronomy, and physics, the data can be straightforward, but in meta-physical or complex sciences, such as, botany, and biology, this becomes more difficult.

If we remember that true science is in total agreement with the Bible, we have nothing to fear and should be looking forward to additional scientific discoveries and fine tuning of current thought.