

CHAPTER 15

BELIEVING THE BIBLE – PART 2

*what about sickness and death?
...and how about healing and life!*

Before reading this chapter, how would you answer the question: Creation and evolution give different accounts of the beginning of time. Which one do you favour as being literally true and why?

Creation or evolution?

When we first start reading the Bible, it won't take long at all to see it contradicting things we were taught at school or learnt elsewhere. Indeed, many people disagree with the first line in the Bible.

Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. (NKJV)

But it gets even more controversial when we read on and see that God created the heavens and the earth in six days.

Exodus 20:11 For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. (NIV)

On the sixth day God created Adam, then shortly after He created Eve. They had many descendants, then sometime after God sent a great flood on the earth to destroy all the living things He had made (Genesis 7:4) sparing only Noah, his family and the animals he took with him into the ark. The population on earth as we know it now originates from Noah's sons; Shem, Ham and Japheth (Genesis 9:19).

Science offers a completely different account saying that all species are related and mankind evolved from a pre-existing life source. This account has been adopted by many schools, universities, museums, most authorities and much of the world media. Which one do we believe?

The theory of evolution

The theory of evolution has, without doubt, undermined people's confidence in the Bible. When it first became well-known, many people strongly contested it because it challenged the existing belief that God created the world in six days. Over time though, evolution has increased in popularity and has gradually replaced the belief in creation as the prevailing view on the origin of mankind.

Evolution purports that life, possibly in a simplified molecular form, originated spontaneously from some kind of chemical reaction. Over a long period of time it evolved into all the life forms we see now. Evolutionists maintain that life evolved from non-living matter. In contrast, the Bible shows us that man has a physical and a spiritual nature. God created Adam, as an adult, from the dust of the ground and then breathed into him the breath of life (Genesis 2:7).

Archaeology has given consistent and convincing support to the theory of evolution. However, archaeology relies fundamentally on 'the concept that the earth's surface was shaped in the past by gradual processes, such as erosion, and by small sudden changes, such as earthquakes, of the type acting today rather than by the sudden divine acts, such as Noah's flood...'¹ It therefore denies Noah's flood by assumption rather than by proof.

The Great Flood

If we accept the possibility that a world-wide flood occurred in the not too distant past, then we would expect to see clear evidence of it. The abundance of fossils throughout the world indicates something catastrophic has happened. Normally, when an animal dies, it is eaten by scavengers or else it decomposes relatively quickly leaving no trace of its existence. In Noah's flood, many fossils would be created because of the pressures of water and sediment.

Because the great flood is so catastrophic, we would also expect to see animal and vegetation remains buried miles underground and the remains of marine life on tops of mountains. Both these phenomena are common place. We would also expect testimonial evidence passed down through the generations, given its huge importance and relatively recent occurrence.

Conversely, if evolution was true, we would expect to see evidence of a continual progression of evolution such as links between man and ape. This has always been in doubt.

In 1991, researchers found blood vessels and soft tissue inside a Tyrannosaurus Rex bone. The tissue samples retained some elas-

ticity. Under evolutionary thinking, the bones were calculated to be sixty-five million years old, so this begs the question, how can soft tissue be preserved for so long? Proponents of evolution will try to offer plausible reasons, so judgment is needed by the critical thinker as to whether these explanations are credible.

The Bible very graphically describes the Flood (Genesis 6–9). Some try to restrict its account to a local flood but it is impossible for flood waters to cover mountains for 150 days (Genesis 7:24) without it being worldwide. The New Testament accepts it as fact. Indeed, Peter seems to indicate in the last days there would rise up people who ignore there was a flood.

2Peter 3:3–7 Above all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, ‘Where is this “coming” he promised? Ever since our ancestors died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation.’ But they deliberately forget that long ago by God’s word the heavens came into being and the earth was formed out of water and by water. By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly. (NIV)

The Big Bang theory

Another branch of science, cosmology, has followed the example of biology in undermining confidence in the Bible. It does this by suggesting the universe itself formed spontaneously in a giant big bang.

In the 1920s, Edwin Hubble saw that galaxies further away from the earth had a red colour. He concluded that galaxies are moving away from us, and the further away a galaxy lay, the faster its speed of recession from us. This finding led to the conclusion that space itself is expanding and carrying galaxies away with it. If the universe is expanding, it follows that in the past, objects were more

densely packed together. The logical conclusion to this is that the universe had burst forth from a ‘primeval atom’—a single concentration of mass and energy.² The Big Bang theory arose primarily from this observation and much scientific thought has been given to examining and developing this theory.

Stephen Hawking, a leading proponent of the Big Bang theory, believed he could explain creation. ‘Because there is a law such as gravity, the universe can and will create itself from nothing. Spontaneous creation is the reason there is something rather than nothing, why the universe exists, why we exist. It is not necessary to invoke God to light the blue touch paper and set the universe going.’³

Spontaneously creating a fine-tuned universe

If we assume the universe spontaneously creates itself, then we are presented with the problem of why the universe, and in particular, the earth, are so finely balanced so as to allow life as we know it to exist. If the universe happened by chance then how did everything work out so perfect?

The earth, unlike any other planet we know of, is ideal for human life. It provides, among other things, air, heat, light, water, food and wind, which are all essential for us to live. A scientist may marvel at the unique way, by chance, these things come together, while a believer will see the continual provision of such things must surely speak of a providential God.

Matthew 5:45...He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.
(NIV)

One academic explanation for the fine tuning of the universe is the multiverse theory. This theory suggests there are an unimaginably high number of universes, all of which were created by big bangs and one of which happened to work. This can only ever be an unproven hypothesis as there is no scientific evidence for this explanation neither can there ever be any.

Heaven suggests short time scales

This argument uses the following logic.

1. Time exists in heaven
2. Heaven and earth share the same time scales
3. Long time scales are unrealistic in heaven
4. Therefore, long time scales are unrealistic on earth

(1) Time exists in heaven

Einstein's theory of special relativity in 1905 challenged the idea of absolute time. He observed that time runs differently depending on relative motion. He also stated that without matter there is no space or time. From this statement, many get the idea that time only exists in our physical dimension and this casts doubt on time existing in the spiritual dimension. Some Christians have purported the idea that there is no time in heaven.

Time has to exist in heaven as time measures change and things happen in heaven. The Bible talks about time in heaven.

Revelation 8:1 When He opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour (NKJV)

(See also Matthew 8:29, Revelation 6:10, 20:10; 22:2 but note 21:25).

Einstein based his theory on observations made in our universe. His conclusions therefore do not necessarily apply to the spiritual dimension.

Only God is eternal. Everything else has a beginning. Angels are created beings and must exist in time. There was a time when the devil did not exist (Ezekiel 28:14–15). There was also a day when Satan sinned and a day before and a day after as well (Isaiah 14:12ff).

(2) Heaven and earth share the same time scales

Not only does time exist in the spiritual dimension, but it is also the same as time on earth. We can see this in the way the physical and spiritual dimensions interact. For example, Satan tempted Eve in the garden of Eden, he accused Job in heaven and he entered Judas to betray Jesus. All these events happened at different times and Satan cannot go back in time on earth or in heaven to change outcomes. We note also that Jesus is waiting to return from heaven at a set time.

Once we accept time in heaven is the same as on earth, then we can make inferences about the time it took to create the universe.

(3) Long time scales are unrealistic in heaven

Currently, many scientific websites suggest the age of the earth is 4.54 billion years, give or take 50 million years. Evolution requires a huge time scale in order to support the theory that life evolved from a chemical reaction. The Big Bang theory also requires such a time scale to support the idea the universe came from a single explosion.

These time scales are not realistic when we consider the spiritual dimension. Angels were created before the earth and mankind. Then Satan and his angels rebelled against God. After this, God created the heavens and the earth, and then He created man.

The following scripture suggests that angels were present when the earth was created.

Job 38:4–7 Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements? Surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? To what were its foundations fastened? Or who laid its cornerstone, when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

Also, if the world took billions of years to create, then the idea the angels were shouting for joy would have no meaning. The Bible tells us God created the universe in six days and its time frame for

the age of the earth is thousands of years, not millions or billions (Psalm 90:4).

God needed to create the earth in order to bring about a solution to sin and rebellion. Given the tension between those angels who do good and those who do evil, billions of years is an unrealistic time scale to wait for a conclusion. Some in heaven feel time and want things hurried up (Revelation 6:10).

God will create a new heaven and earth which will replace the current one (Revelation 21:1). If we had to follow the Big Bang theory, we would have a very long wait indeed to inherit the new heavens and earth. As it is plausible this will take a short time, we should be able to consider the possibility that He created this heaven and earth in a short time as well.

Is there life on other planets?

Today, scientists wonder at the possibility of finding external life on another planet somewhere. However, we can argue theologically that all life has to be connected to this earth in some way. When God creates an individual with the ability to make moral choices, He must provide a way for them to be forgiven in case they sin against Him. Inevitably they will do so, given a long enough time. As we saw in chapters eight and nine, we can only have our sins forgiven through Jesus Christ. An alien living on a remote planet would not know about Jesus Christ and so could not receive forgiveness for their sins and so would remain estranged from God for ever.

Assumptions made by science

In many countries, schools are now obliged to teach evolution as fact rather than as a theory. It is quite possible when we were taught evolution (and the Big Bang theory) that our teachers would have omitted to mention the assumptions underlying them. In view of this, it is prudent to make ourselves aware of these assumptions and reconsider whether we should believe them.

Assumption 1 – everything must be proved scientifically

Science starts off with the premise that all knowledge must be physical and observable, therefore nothing exists otherwise. This premise is, in fact, a statement of faith as it automatically rules out the existence of God who we know is Spirit (John 4:24). This means that science cannot make any meaningful contribution to matters of a spiritual nature, such as the existence of God, angels, the devil, miracles, what happens when we die and so on.

Assumption 2 – physical laws take precedence over God

In his argument promoting the Big Bang, Hawking assumed physical laws have and will always exist and God, if He exists, has to fit within these laws. He placed more importance on the physical laws than on God who created them.

This is an easy assumption to make for scientists who do not believe in God but a very hard assumption to accept for those who do believe. This highlights another problem with current scientific thinking—it assumes physical laws never change.

Christians should have no problem accepting physical laws can be broken because Jesus walked on water (Matthew 14:25–27), performed many miracles (John 7:31) and was resurrected from the dead (John 20:26–29).

Assumption 3 – worldwide flood never happened

Science rejects the possibility of a worldwide flood in spite of ample evidence suggesting it happened and the absense of evidence suggesting it did not happen. Its only drawback appears to be that it does not fit a pre-existing mindset.

Science has limitations

While science is an important subject and has profoundly impacted our lives, we need to recognise its limitations as there will be times when it opposes truth. A number of leading scientists are willing to overlook these assumptions (or treat them as fact) especially when

they try to explain how the universe was formed. This degree of arrogance leaves them open to error. If they adequately communicated the assumptions which underpin their research and caveated their conclusions accordingly, then their arguments would not be anywhere near as persuasive. A secular media are very willing to promote their theories and typically communicate them with little or no acknowledgment of dissenting views.

1 Timothy 6:20 O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called (KJV)

Questions to consider

1. Can you think of any scientific or archaeological evidence suggesting a worldwide flood did not happen? Conversely, is there any evidence suggesting evolution did not happen?
2. Why is the Creation—Evolution debate so hard to resolve?
3. Are there any other assumptions made by science?

References:

- 1 Collins English Dictionary, Third Edition, 1995. See the definition of Uniformitarianism
- 2 Giles Sparrow, *Cosmos*, Second Edition, Quercus 2007, p216
- 3 Stephen Hawking and Leonard Mlodinow, *The Grand Design*, Bantam Books 2010, p180

