

November 14, 2010

THE BIBLE AND SCIENCE

I am not a Scientist! I am, at best, a marginal horticulturist with a bit of botany and biology.

So, I am only good for half of this subject. And, that half is based on nearly 60 years of Bible reading and study....

There is an apparent conflict – at least a proposed conflict – when one does not exist....However, most of this conflict revolves around the Genesis account and around the issue of beginnings. Where we came from. Did we evolve – which is a blatant challenge to the existence of deity...especially to those who don't want to be burdened with the reality of God – so they want to develop their own explanation of origins....

The Bible And Science



The Bible was written in ancient cosmology

- Ancient world people believed that the sun rose and set
- See: Psalm 104:19; 113:3

The Bible was written in ancient physiology

- In the ancient world people believed that the heart was the seat of the emotions
- (Psa. 44:20 - 21)

God adopts the language of the ancient world to communicate His thoughts and did not see reason to explain that the brain was actually the seat of emotion.

I also need to say that this Bible is mine....Although I have to admit that it was not written to me....It was written to Israel – and firstly to ancient Israel.

It is God's revelation to Israel and secondarily through Israel to all mankind. It was written in a language that we do not understand – to an ancient culture that we also do not fully understand.

So, we must read the Bible with this in mind. When we read it through our modern culture and language, we do disservice to the text and to the message.

The sun doesn't "rise and set" – and, the heart is just a pump...Doctor re father....

The heart has been and still is referred to as the seat of the emotions in modern thought and idiom. To us this is metaphor – to them it was physiology.... The bumper sticker does not say "I (brain) New York...."

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“So, if God aligned revelation with one particular science, it would have been unintelligible to people who lived prior to the time of that science, and it would be obsolete to those who lived after that time. We gain nothing by bringing God’s revelation into accordance with today’s science. In contrast, it makes perfect sense that God communicated his revelation to his immediate audience in terms they understood.”

The Lost World of Genesis One (John H. Walton: IVP Academic)

The Bible was not written to us – nor was it written in our language.

However, that does not mean that the Bible is not and can not be understood equally well in our day. It does not mean that the message isn’t as relevant today as it was to the ancients....

This is the miracle of the Bible message...it transcends time and culture....

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- ✗ “The Bible’s message must not be subjected to cultural imperialism. Its message transcends the culture in which it originated, but the form in which the message was imbedded was fully permeated by the ancient culture. This was God’s design and we ignore it at our peril. Sound interpretation proceeds from the belief that the divine and human authors were competent communicators and that we can therefore comprehend their communication.”

The Lost World of Genesis One (John H. Walton: IVP Academic)

Some Christians are imperialists...They want to impose current thinking on the text – to interpret the text in relation to current ideas and notions. This is what the Bible says, because I think this is what the Bible says, or this is what I want the Bible to say....

Most, however, are probably best referred to as “Concordists.”

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BEING IN CONCORD

- ✗ Most Christians are Concordists (attempting to find concord between Science and the Bible)
 - + This is really just an attempt to translate our cosmology into their cosmology
 - + To accomplish this we normally have to commandeer the text for our own ends

Some Christians are imperialists... Most, however, are probably best referred to as "Concordists."

There is no reason for this approach...or this struggle....

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✕ “The Natural World”

- + The ancient cultures had no idea of “The Natural World” without deity....
- + Nothing happened without deity
- + The biblical creation account in Hebrew is functional, *purpose oriented*
- + In the modern view of science we are *process oriented*

Nothing happened without deity (Gen. 1:24-25) The “earth” didn’t bring forth anything...discuss the claim in V. 24...”let the land produce living creatures....” The bigger picture is laid out in verse 25. Although, in V. 11, “the land produced the vegetation...according to their kinds.” The intent is still clear.

Ancient cultures were almost all polytheistic. There was a god for everything. The Bible presents one true God – all powerful, self existent, creator of all things. In him we live and move and have our being – so we too believe that there is nothing without God. We too see God in everything....

The earth was without form and void. God filled the earth and gave it purpose....

However, the Bible is not unscientific.....

The Bible And Science



✕ Science and Water

- + Water and Wind have Weight (Job 28:24-27;)
- + Evaporation and Condensation (Job 36:27-30)
- + Considering the Clouds (Job 26:8; 37:11)
- + Limits of the sea (Job 38:8)

Consider the hydrological cycle – and wind and water – in one of the most ancient texts of the Bible.

The book of Job was most likely written about 4,000 years ago – at the earliest times of writing.

No Conflict...in any of the writings or statements of either Job, his “friends” or in the reply from God....

Weight.... **H4948** מִשְׁקָל *mishqâl mish-kawl'* From H8254; *weight* (numerically estimated); hence, *weighing* (the act):—(full) weight.

Only so much water....

The Bible And Science



✕ The Stars

- + Higher than the heights of Heaven
 - ✕ (Job 11:8)
- + An expanding Universe?
 - ✕ (Job 22:12; Psa. 104:2)
- + Unchanging stellar positions and movements
 - ✕ Zodiac Constellations
 - ★ (Job 38:31-33 See also Genesis 1:14)

Higher than the **Heavens**: **H8064** שָׁמַיִם שְׁמַיִם shâmayim shâmeḥ *shaw-mah'-yim, shaw-meh'* The second form being dual of an unused singular; from an unused root meaning to *be lofty*; the *sky* (as *aloft*; the dual perhaps alluding to the visible arch in which the clouds move, as well as to the higher ether where the celestial bodies revolve):—air, X astrologer, heaven (-s).

Chambers: **H5944** עֲלִיָּא alîyâḥ *al-ee-yaw'* Feminine from H5927; something *lofty*, that is, a *stair way*; also a *second story* room (or even one on the roof); figuratively the *sky*:—ascent, (upper) chamber, going up, loft, parlour.

The Bible seems to have more references to the constellations than any other ancient book

The Pleiades star cluster, also known as the Seven Sisters and Messier 45, is a conspicuous object in the night sky with a prominent place in [ancient mythology](#). The cluster contains hundreds of stars, of which [only a handful](#) are commonly visible to the unaided eye.

No conflict....

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- ✕ “It is I who made the earth and created mankind upon it. My own hands stretched out the heavens; I marshaled their starry hosts....”
- ✕ “I am the LORD and there is no other. I have not spoken in secret, from somewhere in a land of darkness....”
- + Isaiah 45:12, 19

The God of Israel (the God of the Bible) was before all others. His message is universal and obvious.

That is the claim. There is nothing without His creative power. There was no process that could be considered “Natural.” Mankind has nothing new. The biblical creator,

God was **before** all **“Before me no god was formed, nor will there be one after me....”** Isaiah 43:10

A scientist challenged God to see who could build the perfect man – the fastest. God takes him up on the challenge. As the scientist swooped down to gather some earth, God said, “Hey, wait a minute. Get your own dirt!”

But I digress.

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NATURAL LAWS

- ✕ Erosion and Growth
 - + Job 14:9; 28:10
- ✕ Springs of the deep
 - + Job 38:16
- ✕ A molten core?
 - + Job 28:5
- ✕ Precious things out of the rocks
 - + Job 28:10-19



Growth....

Genesis 1:3-11 You need light and water in order to produce vegetation...you also need seasons for growth (1:14)

Consider the Ostrich.... Job 39:17

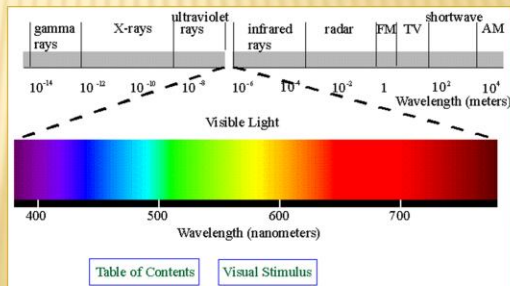
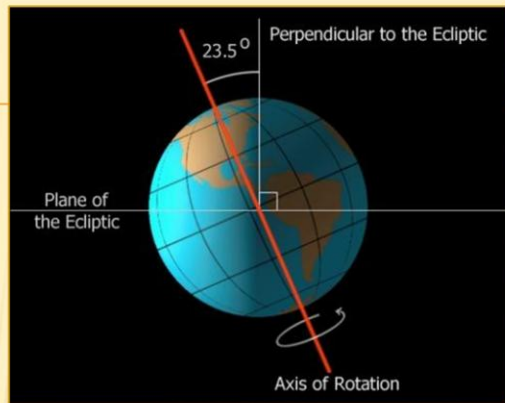
Consider Death.... Job 8:19

The nature of man.... Job 5:7

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✕ Natural Laws

- + The earth is round
 - ✕ Eccl. 1:5
- + North pointing axis
 - ✕ (Job 26:7)
- + Hanging on nothing
 - ✕ (Job 38:12-13)
- + Light travels
 - ✕ (Job 38:35; 24)
- + And is broken down



“Where is the way that the light is divided....” Job 38:24 NASB

The light spectrum reveals only a minor part as visible light to our eyes – and to plant function

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- ✕ The allegory of light in the purpose of God
 - + Let there be light
 - ✕ (Genesis 1:3)
 - + The heavens declare
 - ✕ (Psalm 19:1)
 - + “Arise and shine, for your light has come....”
 - ✕ Isa. 60:1
 - + The “brightness” of his glory
 - ✕ (Hebrews 1:3)

This brings us back to the “Why” of creation – Purpose driven...to create form and function....

It is not about science – it is about people.

Ancient cosmology is still speaking to us today.

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- ✕ "...made his **light** shine in our **hearts** to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ...."
 - + 2 Corinthians 4:6
- ✕ "...but we have this treasure in earthen vessels"
 - + 2 Corinthians 4:7

Ancient cosmology is still speaking to our hearts

The ancient physiology is still as relevant today

This book is a miracle message – not speaking about modern science but, speaking to our hearts....will we listen? This is still relevant today....

We should because we know the reality of our nature – that we are dying - made of earth from the dust. We are formless and empty like the original earth....(See Genesis 1:1-2)

God's purpose is to fill us with His light to make us receptacles of His glory. Will we let Him?