"God's Word in Nature: What about Science?"

Worldview Camp - Pinehaven

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Introduction

A. Biblical considerations (Gen 1:1; Ps 19:1-6; Rom 1:18-32)

> Gen 1:1 "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth."
>
> Gen 1:27-28 "God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; …"
>
> Ps 19:1-2 "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge."
>
> Rom 1:20 "For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse."

B. What have your heard? What are your questions?

C. What you will hear (if you're not already).

D. Let's ask questions

I. What about the Relationship between Science and Christianity?

A. Prominent images of science and religion (including Christianity)

1. They necessarily _____.
   a. E.g. Galileo
   b. E.g. Charles Darwin
   c. E.g. Richard Dawkins: "When one person suffers from a delusion, it is called insanity. When many people suffer from a delusion, it is called religion" (*The God Delusion*).
   d. E.g. Debate between Ken Ham and Bill Nye
2. They are totally _____ (so no conflict is possible).
3. Neither view is acceptable for a biblical Christian.
   a. There is some overlap between science and Christianity—so conflict is possible.
   b. But there is a "positive" relationship between science and biblical Christianity.

B. Important considerations about science.

1. "Science" does not say anything—scientists do.
2. Scientists sometimes speak as *philosophers*.
   a. "Science" describes and attempts to explain what is empirically accessible.
   b. _____is a *philosophy* that fuses the philosophy of Naturalism (only physical matter exists) with the methods of science.
      (1) Only physical phenomena and causes are legitimate.
      (2) Appeals to "intelligence" to explain the cosmos or the origin of life must be rejected.
   c. Christianity necessarily conflicts with "scientism," but not with science.

d. Be a **"hat detector"** to determine when someone is speaking as a "scientist" or as a "philosopher" of scientism.

Richard Dawkins: "Any creative intelligence, of sufficient complexity to design anything, comes into existence only as the end product of an extended process of gradual evolution. Creative intelligences, being evolved, necessarily arrive late in the universe, and therefore cannot be responsible for designing it. God ... is a delusion;..." (*The God Delusion* [Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 2006], 31).

Stephen Hawking: "... quantum theory predicts the multiverse—the idea that ours is just one of many universes that appeared spontaneously out of nothing, each with different laws of nature" (emphasis added; Hawking is speaking of his position in his book, *The Grand Design*, 2010).

3. It's often a "worldview conflict."

4. Science is not totally objective, purely empirical, or entirely rational.
   a. Philosophers of science have effectively argued this (e.g. Thomas Kuhn, Karl Popper).
      (1) Science incorporates a variety of metaphysical or philosophical assumptions.
      (2) Scientists are often influenced by strong commitments.
   b. Various sciences differ in the extent to which they are empirical testable and repeatable.
      (1) Some sciences use repeatable experiments on obviously empirical realities.
      (2) Some sciences are "not-so-repeatable" and "not-so-empirical" (e.g. detection of dark matter, gamma rays, "strings" in string theory, the evolution from one specie to another).
      (3) Some sciences deal with apparently one-time events (e.g. historical events, archaeology, theories about the origin of the cosmos [e.g. Big Bang] and the origin of life [spontaneous generation or abiogenesis—life arising from non-living matter]).
   c. Yet, many who speak *in the name of science* categorically reject any appeal to "intelligent design," because it is presumably not empirically testable and repeatable. (Note the 2005 court decision in Dover, PA case against Intelligent Design in the public school science classroom.)

Judge Jones (*Kitzmiller vs. Dover Area School Board*): "While supernatural explanations may be important and have merit, they are not part of science. This self-imposed convention of science, which limits inquiry to testable, natural explanations about the natural world, is referred to by philosophers as "methodological naturalism" and is sometimes known as the scientific method. Methodological naturalism is a "ground rule" of science today which requires scientists to seek explanations in the world around us based upon what we can observe, test, replicate, and verify" (John Jones, *Kitzmiller et al. v. Dover Area Schoo*l District, Case No. 04cv2688, document 342, filed 12/20/2005; Memorandum Opinion, p. 65). (Emphasis added.)

C. The positive _____ relationship between science and Christianity: The pioneers of early modern science were strong creationists and many were devoted Christians.
   1. Galileo (1564-1642)
   2. Isaac Newton (1642-1727)
   3. Robert Boyle (1635-1703)
   4. Michael Faraday (1791-1867)
   5. Gregor Mendel (1874-1937)
   6. James Clerk Maxwell (1831-1879)
   7. Francis Collins (1950-

D. The positive _____ relationship between science and Christianity.
   1. Biblical creationism explains the presuppositions necessary for science that science itself cannot justify.
      a. Nature is _____.

b. Nature is _____.

c. The human _____ is rational and can understand nature (i.e., they are adequately correlated).

Albert Einstein: "The most incomprehensible thing about the world is that it is comprehensible" (*Einstein: A Biography* (1954) by Antonina Vallentin, p. 24).

d. The physical senses are sufficiently _____.

2. Biblical creationism supplies a strong _____ for doing science.
   a. Nature is "good" and worthy of study (Gen 1:31).
   b. Nature must be studied <u>empirically</u> (because God did not <u>have</u> to create it in any particular way; we need to look to see what He did).
   c. Humans have the capacity and responsibility for supervising nature (Gen. 1:26,28 "let them rule" and "subdue" the earth).
   d. "Fallen" humanity and loving one's neighbor prompts care and compassion through science and other avenues.

II. How Do We Account for the Existence of the Universe?

A. Christian claims:

1. God brought the universe into existence.
2. The universe is not eternal, self-explanatory, or self-sufficient.

B. Modern science and the **Big Bang**: The universe **began**.

1. 19th – early 20th century: universe widely held to be <u>eternal</u> by many.
2. "Big Bang" idea **surfaces**.
   a. Einstein's general theory of relativity (1915) implied either an <u>expanding</u> or <u>contracting</u> universe.
   b. Edwin Hubble
      (1) 1924: Observed other galaxies.
      (2) 1929: The "cosmic Doppler" effect: The universe is expanding.
3. Big Bang idea is **suppressed**.
   a. Arthur Eddington, British astrophysicist, wrote, "Philosophically, the notion of a beginning of the present order of Nature is repugnant to me.… I should like to find a genuine loophole."
   b. Fred Hoyle rejected the Big Bang idea primarily because the "big bang theory requires a recent origin of the Universe that openly invites the concept of creation" (*The Intelligent Universe*, p. 237).
   c. Einstein contrived a "cosmological constant" to make the universe "static" and avoid an expanding universe. (He later admitted that this was his "biggest blunder.")
4. Big Bang idea eventually **succeeds**.
   a. 1965 Arno Pensias & Robert Wilson: Unexpectedly discovered "background radiation" throughout the universe.
   b. Subsequent Cosmic Background Explorer satellites confirm Big Bang models.

C. Impact on scientists (including atheists and skeptics).

- "What we found is evidence for the birth of the universe.... It's like looking at God" (George Smoot, COBE project leader).
- "It is the discovery of the century, if not of all time" (Stephen Hawking, Cambridge University).

- "We have found the Holy Grail of cosmology" (Michael Turner, University of Chicago).
- "For the scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of reason, the story ends like a bad dream. He has scaled the mountains of ignorance; he is about to conquer the highest peak; as he pulls himself over the final rock, he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries" (Robert Jastrow, *God and the Astronomers*, p. 116).

D. **The significance** of the BIG BANG

1. The universe BEGAN (cf. biblical creation).
2. The Naturalist's major challenge: Began FROM WHAT and HOW (if there was "nothing")?

E. The alternatives for the Naturalist (or atheist).[1]

1. Oscillating universe. (Repeated "big bangs" with ongoing expansion/collapse)
2. Universe is simply "uncaused"; it just "happened"; things can come "from nothing" and for "no reason."

Stephen Hawking: "Bodies such as stars or black holes cannot just appear out of nothing. But a whole universe can. . . . Because there is a law like 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." (*The Grand Design*, 180).

Alex Rosenberg: "Why is there a universe at all? No reason at all. Why is there a multiverse in which universes pop into existence for no reason at all? No reason at all! It's just another quantum event. What science and scientism tell those who hanker for more is "Get over it!" (*The Atheist's Guide to Reality: Enjoying Life without Illusions*, pp. 38-39. Norton. Kindle Edition).

III. How Do We Account for the Characteristics of the Universe?

A. Considerations from **teleology or apparent design** (e.g. William Paley, 1743-1805)

1. Considerations from design ("teleology" < *telos* = end; purpose; design).
2. E.g. A discovered watch in the forest.

B. The **"Anthropic" Principle** (*anthropos* = man; humanity)

1. Numerous physical constants and the ratios among them are amazingly precise to make the existence of human life possible.
2. Or, without this "fine-tuning" of these numerical values, human life could never exist.
3. The universe began _____ _____.
4. How do we explain this?

C. **Examples** of the Anthropic Principle.[2]

1. Expansion rate of universe "must be fine-tuned to an accuracy of one part in 10^{55}" (Hugh Ross, in Moreland's *The Creation Hypothesis*, p. 163).
2. The ratio of proton mass to electron mass (1,836 times heavier).

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[1] See my article "Where Will We Go Without God? *Christian Standard* 150 (March 2015): 30-31 available at http://www.christianstandard.com/2014/06/where-will-we-go-without-god/.

[2] For introductory explanations, see Lee Strobel, *The Case for a Creator*; J.P. Moreland, ed., *The Creation Hypothesis*; Hugh Ross, *Fingerprint of God*; John Lennox, *God's Undertaker: Has Science Buried God?*, 71-77; Guillermo Gonzalez and Jay Richards, *The Privileged Planet* (also available on DVD).

3. Ratio of number of electrons to number of protons:
   a. Must be accurate to 1 in 10^{37} power.
   b. Hugh Ross illustration of piling coins to the moon (see Ross, *The Creator and the Cosmos*, p. 109).
4. Strength of gravity in relation to other primary forces. (See Robin Collins in Strobel's *Case for a Creator*, pp. 131-132.)

D. Impact on "non-creationists"

Fred Hoyle (agnostic/atheist): "A common sense interpretation of the facts suggests that a superintellect as monkeyed with physics, as well as with chemistry and biology, and there are no blind forces worth speaking about in nature."

Stephen Hawking: "The remarkable fact is that the values of these numbers [e.g. ratio of proton to electron mass] seem to have been very finely adjusted to make possible the development of life" (*A Brief History of Time*, p. 125).

Arno Penzias (Nobel Prize in physics): "Astronomy leads us to a unique event, a universe which was created out of nothing, one with the very delicate balance needed to provide exactly the conditions required to permit life, and one which has an underlying (one might say 'supernatural') plan" (quoted in Margenau and Varghese, eds., *Cosmos, Bios, and Theos*, p. 83).

Antony Flew (at age of 81 converted from atheism to theism. He had "to go where the evidence leads"): "I think the most impressive arguments for God's existence are those that are supported by recent scientific discoveries.... I now believe that the universe was brought into existence by an infinite Intelligence. I believe that this universe's intricate laws manifest what scientists have called the Mind of God" (*There is a God: How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind*, p. 88).

E. Biblical connections (Isa 45:18; Ps 19:1-2; Rom 1:20)

Isa 45:18 "For thus says the Lord, who created the heavens, (He is the God who formed the earth and made it, He established it and did not create it a waste place, but formed it to be inhabited)" (NASV).

IV. How Do We Account for the Origin of Life?

A. Naturalism's claim: Life arose through blind, undirected, non-intelligent natural forces and random chance.

Richard Dawkins (atheist and evolutionary biologist at Oxford): "Biology is the study of complicated things that give the appearance of having been designed for a purpose" (*The Blind Watchmaker*, p. 1)

B. Quick but important point: Darwinism cannot explain the *origin* of life. Life must already exist for natural selection to have anything to act on.

C. The origin of life requires:

1. The right _____ (i.e., 20 amino acids).
2. The right _____ of the materials to form proteins.
3. _____ to direct the process of sequencing (e.g. DNA).
4. DNA specifies the order of very complex sequences of amino acids and proteins.
5. This is "complex specified information" (CSI). (Especially see works by William Dembski.)

D. Key challenges for the Naturalist:

1. Dilemma: Existing information (DNA) is necessary for life; but existing life is necessary for DNA.
2. How did the information originate?
3. Purely naturalistic processes cannot generate CSI (complex specified information).

E. The wonders of the DNA molecule: A "signature" of intelligence?

1. Four "bases": A,G,C,T (3 billion pairs in humans).
2. A "triplet" of three consecutive bases gives the code for each specific amino acid to form a protein.
3. 20 different amino acids are thereby "instructed" to form proteins (from 40-27,000 amino acids for ONE protein).
4. Even "simple" organisms have many proteins (e.g. E. coli has 4,300 proteins).
5. Each human cell has DNA (which, if stretched out, would be approximately 6 feet long). By consequence, a human's DNA (with 100 trillion cells) would reach _____ BILLION miles.
6. One gram of DNA can store 700 terabytes of data (= 14,000 fifty-gigabyte Blu-ray discs!)
7. DNA could store all the world's data in one room! (www.sciencemag.org/news/2017/03/dna-could-store-all-worlds-data-one-room)

F. Acknowledgment from skeptics and atheists.

> **Francis Crick** (co-discoverer of the DNA molecule): "An honest man, armed with all the knowledge available to us now, could only state that in some sense, the origin of life appears at the moment to be almost a miracle, so many are the conditions which would have been satisfied to get it going" (*Life Itself*, p. 88; emphasis added).
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> **George Whitesides** (Prof. of Chemistry, Harvard): "Most chemists believe, as do I, that life emerged spontaneously from mixtures of molecules in the prebiotic Earth. How? I have no idea. . . . On the basis of all the chemistry that I know, it seems to me astonishingly improbable" (*Chemical Engineering News* 85 [2007]: 12-17).
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> **Fred Hoyle**: "Life could not have originated here on the Earth. Nor does it look as though biological evolution can be explained from within an earthbound theory of life. Genes from outside the Earth are needed to drive the evolutionary process. This much can be consolidated by strictly scientific means, by experiment, observation and calculation" (*The Intelligent Universe*, p. 242).

1. **Fred Hoyle** estimated the chances of life originating on earth: 1 in 10 to the _____th power!
   a. Number of estimated atoms in the visible universe: 10 to the _____th power.
   b. "Panspermia Hypothesis": Life came to earth from elsewhere in the universe.
2. **Richard Dawkins'** "admission": A "signature?!" (See the interview segment with Richard Dawkins in the movie "Expelled" with Ben Stein.)

V. What about Evolution? Some Problems with Darwinian Evolution

A. **The EVIDENCE (and fossil) problem** (see Phillip Johnson, *Darwin on Trial* and Jonathan Wells, *Icons of Evolution*).

1. Darwin acknowledged the fossil problem.

> "Geology assuredly does not reveal any such finely graduated organic chain; and this, perhaps, is the most obvious and gravest objection which can be urged against my theory. The explanation lies, as I believe, in the extreme imperfection of the geological record" (Darwin, *Origin of Species*, in chap 6, "On the Imperfection of the Geological Record").

2. The paradigm problem: *Gradualism* VS. *Punctuationism*.
   a. Richard Dawkins: Evolution must be gradual (see *Climbing Mount Improbable*).
   b. Stephen Gould: Evolution cannot be gradual and the fossil record shows this. (>> "punctuated equilibrium")

3. Problems and limitations with classic evolutionist examples (e.g. Peppered moths, Darwin's finches, Haeckel's drawings, four-winged fruit flies). (See Jonathan Wells, *Icons of Evolution.*)

B. **The TIME problem and the Cambrian Explosion**

1. 19th century: earth about 100my—not nearly enough time for Darwinian evolution.
2. Big Bang in cosmology (universe is 14byo; earth 4.5byo) gives much more time.
3. But the "Big Bang" in geology (the "Cambrian Explosion") occurred within about 10my, and almost all major phyla appear in the fossil record. (See Stephen Meyer, *Darwin's Doubt: The Explosive Origin of Animal Life and the Case for Intelligent Design*, 2013.)
4. If 100my was not nearly enough time, the Cambrian era allows only 1/10 of that time.

C. **The MECHANISM problem**

1. Charles Darwin (gradualism) vs. Michael Behe (irreducible complexity)

> **Darwin**: "If it could be demonstrated that any complex organ existed which could not possibly have been formed by numerous, successive, slight modifications, my theory would absolutely break down" (*Origin of Species*).
>
> **Behe**: "An irreducibly complex biological system, if there is such a thing would be a powerful challenge to Darwinian evolution. Since natural selection can only choose systems that are already working, then if a biological system cannot be produced gradually, it would have to arise as an integrated unit, in one fell swoop, for natural selection to have anything to act on" (*Darwin's Black Box: The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution*, p. 39).

2. Behe: Even the "simplest" organisms are incredibly complex units with many interdependent parts (e.g. a mousetrap; the bacterial flagellum).
3. See Dean Kenyon, *Of Pandas and People*.
   a. Kenyon was once a leading evolutionist and co-author of *Biochemical Predestination* (1969), a widely used naturalistic evolutionary textbook.
   b. He has since rejected this view, claiming that the problems are insurmountable for "chemical evolution" to "self-organize" the raw chemical materials.

D. **The PARADIGM problem** (evolutionists strongly disagree on how evolution must have occurred)

1. Richard Dawkins: "*Gradualness* is of the essence…. If you throw out gradualness, you throw out the very thing that makes evolution more plausible than creation" (emphasis added).
2. Stephen Gould: "The modern theory of evolution *does not require gradual change*. In fact, the operation of Darwinian processes should yield exactly what we see in the fossil record. *It is gradualism that we must reject*, not Darwinism" (*The Panda's Thumb*, 182; emphasis added).

E. The **Information problem** (see the section above on the origin of life)

Reflections and Suggestions

A. Don't get hung up on the age of things.
B. Many scientists were, and are, devout Christians.
C. Biblical creation *affirms* science.
D. Science *confirms* biblical creation.