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Science and the Bible



Authority of Scriptures - Steve Gregg

In "Science and the Bible," Steve Gregg argues that while many people believe there is a conflict between the Bible and science, this is not necessarily true. Scientific knowledge is constantly evolving and changing, and the historical accuracy of the Bible can be supported through careful examination. In fact, the Bible may have accurately anticipated scientific findings and discoveries centuries in advance, and its teachings and laws reflect important principles of hygiene and public health. While not conclusive proof, Gregg asserts that these instances suggest a possible relationship between science and the Bible.

Transcript

I'm sure that you are sufficiently acquainted with the spirit of our age to know that today, belief that the Bible is the word of God is not the prevailing belief of our culture. Perhaps 30, 40, 50 years ago, I don't know because I haven't been around 50 years, but I think in my early life, 40-something years ago, it would have been much more the case that the average person in Western civilization, at least in America, would be inclined to say they believe the Bible is the word of God, even if they weren't Christians. I mean, even if they had never made any commitment to the Bible or any commitment to Jesus.

It was sort of just part of the whole worldview of the Western civilization, that the Bible is the authoritative word of God, and even though a lot of people didn't necessarily wish to change their lives to conform to it, in their heart of hearts, they believed that it should be respected as such. That by no means expresses the opinion of the modern contemporary culture in which we live, and in many cases, people's rejection of the Bible's claims to being the word of God are not really based on any known data that's in conflict with it. Many people would simply express their skepticism in terms like, well, how could anyone living in the late 20th century still believe those old writings? Without any particular argument against it, without having a clue why we should doubt the Scripture's inspiration now more than people doubted it 50 years ago.

For most people, their doubts on these things simply reflect conformity on their part to the spirit of the age, the zeitgeist of our time. It is an age of skepticism about things

supernatural. In fact, so much so that many people feel that the supernatural worldview is simply superstitious.

Not supernatural, but superstitious. That was only a few days ago, my liberal friend who called me on the radio was offended because an earlier caller had asked me about demon possession, and I made it very plain, I believe in demon possession. And my friend who called said he was embarrassed to hear a Christian say they still believe in superstitious things, demon possession.

And I wasn't surprised coming from him. I know liberals think that way, and I know that most non-Christians think that way. The belief in the spiritual, the belief in the supernatural is just kind of outmoded.

And probably the majority of people in our society not only think Christians are silly, but think that New Agers are silly too. New Age philosophy gets ridiculed a lot by the press, and should for other reasons. But the fact is that it is a supernaturalistic worldview too, and the spirit of our age just doesn't cotton to that.

Certainly the universities don't. It is generally assumed that the Bible can't be true because it presents a supernatural worldview. But as far as any specific evidence that a supernatural worldview is incorrect, or that the Bible is itself flawed, the average doubter could not present to you any evidence if you asked him.

You could say, well, I believe the Bible is the word of God, and they say, well, I don't believe it's the word of God. And if you say, okay, I'll tell you what, give me ten minutes to provide the evidence for my believing it is the word of God, and I'll give you ten minutes, I'll give you a half hour to present your evidence that it isn't. In almost every case, you're going to find them with a blank stare after you've given your evidence, because they don't have any evidence at all.

They just disbelieve, because they figure that's the modern way to be. You just don't believe in this stuff anymore. Superstition.

Well, this kind of unthinking, unbelief is so widespread that you might make the mistake of thinking that it is always the case that an unbeliever hasn't thought things through. It is not so. There are unbelievers who have thought things through a fair bit, and they have found things in the Bible that they believe to be flawed.

And these present to them an occasion, an excuse, we might say, to reject the Bible. Now, some of these people might be more or less honest people. I can't say.

I don't know what's in everyone's heart. If a person saw only what they regarded to be flaws in the Scripture, and never saw the evidence in favor of the inspiration of Scripture, and never knew how to explain those things that they see as flawed correctly, they might honestly reject the Scripture for the time being. But most people are not in that

category.

Most people are just looking for reasons to disbelieve the Scripture. And even if they are somewhat honest about rejecting the Scripture because X, usually X is a conclusion they've reached earlier by some dishonesty, like the rejection of a supernatural worldview. There's no honesty in that.

How could anyone, on the basis of any kind of claimed evidence, just rule out the supernatural? Where is the evidence that the supernatural does not exist? There is no such evidence. You can't prove by evidence a universal negative. And for that reason, people are often less honest than they think they are.

Now, I'm interested in apologetics. I told you earlier, apologetics is the field of defending your position, whatever it may be. Christian apologetics involves defending Christian positions.

The belief that the Bible is the Word of God, the fact that Jesus is the Son of God, that he rose from the dead, that the Gospel is true as opposed to certain perversions of the Gospel. Defending the truth is part of what we call apologetics. I want to say, because we're going to at this point get into the field of apologetics right now in this lecture, I want to make it clear what apologetics is and what it is not good for.

A lot of people, once they begin to learn biblical evidences and become impressed with the strength of the evidence, make the wrong assumption that if they could simply master this information and present it to every unbeliever, that everyone would get saved. That you could, by having the superior argument and the conclusive evidence on your side, you could win everyone over to Christ. Unfortunately, once you master this evidence, as I know from experience, you can present it to the unbeliever, and you'd be amazed how many people still don't believe.

And it becomes clear that not everyone is as interested in the truth as you might be. Not everyone is as interested in letting the evidence lead them to the conclusions that it would naturally lead them to. Many of them already know the conclusions that they're willing to settle for.

And they simply will rule out any serious consideration of evidence that damages those conclusions. And that is simply the mindset of a great number of people, certainly not all. But I don't want you to think that by learning Christian apologetics and Christian evidences that somehow you will now be equipped to convert everyone you meet who's a skeptic.

You will have enough information to do so. But it takes more than information to convert a person. It takes a change of heart.

It takes conviction of the Holy Spirit. The Apostle Paul said that when he came to Corinth,

over in 1 Corinthians 2, he reminds them, he's writing to the Corinthians after he's already spent 18 months with them, and now he's gone somewhere else, so he's writing a letter back to them. He reminds them of his early experience with them when he first arrived in Corinth.

And he said, in 1 Corinthians 2, And I, brethren, when I came to you, I did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom, declaring to you the testimony of God, for I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, and my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in the demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. If a person is forced into a corner intellectually, so that they have nowhere to go but to acknowledge that you're right, even though they don't want to acknowledge you're right, even though they don't love the truth, they simply run out of arguments and you still have plenty left, and they say, I can't argue with this person.

Okay, I have to admit it. Okay, you got me. I can't argue that.

And then maybe under such pressure they may be persuaded to say a sinner's prayer or whatever it is you're trying to persuade them to do. You may think you've made a convert, but if the heart is not converted, that person is not going to be any more changed by having agreed verbally with you. Or even if that person has been intellectually convinced by your argument that it's true, if there is no experience with God, if there's no change of heart, no conversion, no real regeneration, then that evidence will not be enough to sustain them in the conflict of kingdoms that they will be in, the kingdom of God versus the kingdom of darkness.

They will have become convinced of Christianity simply because of human wisdom arguments. And the first person who comes along with an alternative view that seems to their mind as equally good arguments or better will lead them away as quickly as they were let in. And therefore Paul did not wish for his converts to be converted on the basis of intellectual arguments.

And I agree with him. I'm of the same opinion. And you might say, well then why bother with such arguments? Why bother with the whole field of apologetics at all? Why not just proclaim Christ and Him crucified and let God do the converting? Well, that might be a good idea.

In some cases that certainly is what God uses, the foolishness of preaching, to save people. But that does not mean there is never an occasion when it is legitimate to present evidence. Remember Peter said in 1 Peter 3, 15, Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts and be ready always to give an answer or a defense to everyone who asks you the reason for your hope.

It continues. There is a time and a function of apologetics. It is not, however, correct to think that if you master apologetics and Christian evidences and you can present them articulately and you are a great debater and so forth, that you are going to win everyone you get a chance to converse with.

There is more to it than that. But I will tell you what apologetics is good for. This is what I like about apologetics.

When I go into a conversation that ends up being an exchange of arguments in a debate or whatever with someone who is an unbeliever, I am not expecting them to be converted by my arguments. I will be glad if they are. I will be glad if they are converted after we have had our discussion, if it is a genuine conversion.

But I see apologetics as what we might call pre-evangelism. Evangelism is the proclamation of the goodness of Jesus Christ. Apologetics is something that sort of paves the way for that.

You see, I think that the average unbeliever wants to believe that he is an honest unbeliever. Even very bad people know that lying is not good. Some of them don't mind being liars themselves, but almost everyone doesn't like being lied to.

Almost everyone gets mad if someone lies to them and deceives them. And most people, with a few exceptions, most people like to think that they are basically good, honest people themselves. Where you find someone who doesn't believe he is honest and doesn't care, then what I am about to say doesn't apply.

But I think those people are somewhat exceptional. I think the average unbeliever wants to have an opinion of himself that he is a decent person. He may not believe this Jesus stuff, this fundamentalist garbage, but he is a good folk.

He is honest. And he can feel good about himself if he believes that his reasons for rejecting Christianity are intellectually viable. In other words, if he thinks the evidence is against Christianity, therefore, I am being honest by rejecting it.

How could I do anything else? I could not become a Christian without sacrificing my intellectual integrity. Because I know that the Bible is not true, I simply, as an honest person, must never become a Christian. I must never accept the Bible.

This is how I think many people, if they think about their position, often think about it. Some of them don't think about it at all. People are remarkable for their not thinking.

The most highly organized matter in the universe is the human brain. A computer that exceeds the capabilities of all computers created so far by man. And yet, they go largely amused.

People don't use their brains as much as they should. And I never quite understood why that is. But the fact is, most don't.

But when people do, I think that there is a certain element out there, a person who says, I am rejecting Christianity because, look, all the evidence is against it here. Now, this is where apologetics comes in. If they believe that the truth lies elsewhere from Christianity, that they more or less want to believe what's true, then there is some value in showing them that the evidence that is stumbling them from believing the truth is evidence that is not valid.

And that the real evidence lies elsewhere. Such people, if they are already honest, may be rejecting the truth because they don't know it's the truth. And by showing them that it's the truth, they'll say, oh, okay, fine, I want that then.

I mean, there are definitely people who don't want to suppress the truth, they just don't know it. There are others who do want to suppress it. Different kinds of people.

Now, one thing that I like to do, even with a person who doesn't seem to be real honest, is to show him the evidence for belief in the Bible so that when he walks away, he's not necessarily converted, but he's got to be convicted. Because once I have shown him that all the evidence is in favor of the Christian position, he can go away rejecting the position, but he can no longer go away thinking that he's an honest rejecter of the position. He knows now where the evidence is.

He may say, I still choose not to be a Christian, but he's got to live, he's got to sleep every night with the knowledge that he is rejecting something against all evidence. And while that may not convert him, it's got to convict anyone who's got the slightest sense of desire to be honest. You're going to find people who don't care about being honest, and it won't work for them.

But there are people out there, and they're probably the ones who can be converted anyway, there are people who care something about being honest. They do care something about the truth. They just don't know it yet, and that's where apologetics helps.

They are stumbled by misinformation. If someone tells them the Bible is full of flaws and therefore can't be the Word of God, they may never read the Bible. Why bother? There's a lot of reading.

I don't have much extra time. I'm not going to read it. I've been told by my professor and colleagues that it's full of flaws.

He saved me a lot of time. I don't have to look into that. And that's essentially, I think, that's where most intellectual rejecters of Christianity probably are.

I'm giving them the benefit of the doubt. The other parts of it are just dishonest. Okay? Now, when people do raise actual objections to the inspiration of Scripture, they fall along a lot of different lines, but it seems to me there are three principal objections that you hear more often that people think prove the Bible can't be trusted as the Word of God.

They would be, a very common view is that the Bible has been disproved by science. And since science means knowledge, that's what the word actually means. Science is the discovery of truth, they think.

If science is contradictory to the Bible, well, it's an easy choice. You've got to go with science. It's truth.

And if the Bible claims something that's unscientific, the Bible must not be true. I mean, the writers may have thought they were telling the truth, but hey, give them a break. They lived in pre-scientific times.

They didn't know better. We've discovered better things now. They're simple-minded folks, primitive.

We don't hold it against them that they were superstitious, but we now know more. Science has proven X, Y, Z, and X, Y, Z doesn't happen to agree with what the Bible says, and therefore, while we can be, you know, what shall I say? I can't think of what I'm wishing. We can show some generosity in our judgment of those poor, ignorant people who wrote the Bible.

They were pre-scientific folks, but after all, we don't believe those things anymore because science has proven otherwise. The perception that science and the Bible are at odds with each other, hopelessly in conflict with each other, is a very widespread notion. Although most people can't think of one example of the Bible being contradicted by science, most people, I think today, assume that it is so.

And that is an a priori argument against belittling the Bible. Another area of criticism that has been raised at times, and not so much in recent years as in former times, was that the Bible, in making historical statements, is not accurate. That archeology or history has proven, or the study of history has proven, that the Bible was mistaken about these historical statements.

Obviously, if that claim can be sustained, then the Bible can't be trusted. I mean, much of the Bible is historical narrative. It tells things that are purported to be true historically, and if they're not true, then the Bible can't be the word of God.

And the third thing, these are just the most common, there are other complaints, but they're of lesser weight. Just like people saying, you know, the Bible's old-fashioned in its morals, or whatever. I mean, people reject it for that reason, but that's not really an

argument.

Maybe we're just too twisted in our morals. I mean, that's at least an equal possibility. But the third principle argument that really carries some weight against the inspiration of Scripture is the charge you often hear that the Bible contradicts itself.

That there's discrepancies between various passages. It says this here, and over here it says the opposite. And if it contradicts itself, I mean, what can you deduce from that? That if one statement contradicts another statement, then both cannot be true.

In fact, that's the nature of a contradiction. That's how we define a contradiction. Two statements, they can't both be true.

And if the Bible says this one, and contradicts itself over here, by definition, both statements can't be true, and for that reason, one of the statements at least must be wrong. Both could be wrong, but they can't both be true. One or both of them must be wrong, and whichever one is wrong certainly isn't inspired by God.

And this is the way the argument goes. The Bible's got contradictions, proves it's not inspired by God. So, here are some, these are three of the heavyweight arguments.

Now, what I would like to demonstrate in this lecture, if I have the time, or in this lecture and the next one, is that it is on these very points that the public are generally so misinformed. Because when it comes to the scientific accuracy of Scripture, when it comes to the historical accuracy of Scripture, and when it comes to the internal consistency of Scripture, the evidence is all really in the other direction. That the Bible is shown to be incredibly accurate, much more than you'd expect it to be, written thousands of years ago, and an age before there was even such a thing as what we would call empirical science today.

One would certainly expect a book written so ancient would be full of errors of a scientific source, and that we would have discovered so by now. And while the average person thinks that that is the case, the amazing thing is, it isn't. It isn't the case.

In fact, the evidence is very, very different than that, when considered. Likewise with the historical accuracy of the Bible, or the issue of whether the Bible can contradict itself or not. We will look very carefully at these issues, because they are important.

Not only do we need to see that the objections are false, but by examining these categories, we'll see how much support for the Bible's integrity can be gleaned from these considerations. Let's start with the issue of the science in the Bible. Now, to a certain extent, I'm going to read the notes.

I mean, I wrote the notes off the top of my head, I could lecture it off the top of my head, but I'm going to read the notes for the simple reason that I've given you more extensive

notes than I will for most lectures, because there's so much detail, I didn't expect you could write these things down at the rate I would speak them. But once I've written them down, it makes more sense to read them than to try to paraphrase them, and you're trying to follow your notes, and I'm saying something in different words, and I might as well just go through what the notes say, with additional commentary. You can see at the bottom of page one, natural evidence is a science in the Bible, first category of great importance to consider.

The general opinion of modern people is that there is some fundamental conflict between the Bible and science, and that belief in the Bible somehow inhibits scientific progress. This is absolutely false for several reasons. Now, let me say this first of all.

I, over the years, have heard many suggestions made that the teaching of creationism in the public schools would set American educational progress back 50 years. I've heard people say that, who, of course, are opposing the inclusion of the teaching of creationism in schools. It's clear that most people in America believed in creationism 50 years ago.

Probably a smaller percentage do now, but it's quite clear that the educational establishment is much less tolerant of creationism than before. Back in 1920, there was the famous Scopes trial, sometimes called the monkey trial. There was a teacher named John Scopes, I think it was in Tennessee, if I'm not mistaken, who actually taught evolution in a classroom and was fired for it in public schools, because in 1920, evolution was still regarded as untrue and heresy, and there was still a general commitment to the idea of the biblical creation, even in the public school system.

It's hard to imagine that today. Everything's reversed now. Now our teachers can be fired for teaching creationism.

But the Scopes trial was a time where two heavyweight legal bulldogs faced off in this courtroom, and it was a big scene, and essentially, the decision was made that John Scopes could not continue teaching evolution, although, even though the case was lost for the evolutionists, in the publicity of the case, the sentiments of the public were largely turned favorable toward evolution, for the simple reason that the man who was defending the creationists didn't know much about the evidence about creation, and the man who was defending the evolutionists brought out a lot of typical evolutionary arguments that seemed convincing to ignorant people who didn't know better, and the public, through the press, was largely convinced that evolution was true after all, and although the case was lost, the spirit of the age shifted more, and gradually, the evolutionary teaching became the orthodoxy of the public school system. But what I'm saying is, there are now people who say, if we would go back to allowing creationism to be taught side by side with evolutionism in the schools, that would set back educational and scientific progress in this country 50 years. Obviously, that's not going to be good, although, frankly, things might have been better in some ways 50 years ago, in that

respect.

But, although I would miss the internet now. Just as an aside, one of the things that is ironic about this fear that the evolutionists have is that I have never yet met a creationist who is advocating the replacement of evolutionary teaching with the teaching of creation. Have you ever heard anyone say, we need to stop teaching evolution in the classroom and start teaching creationism? I've never heard anyone say that.

But there is a strong movement that says, why don't we present the scientific evidence, scientific existence, for evolution, and then, alongside, also tell the students what scientific evidence exists for creationism, and just leave it to them to make up their mind. That is the only thing any creationist activist I've ever heard of has ever suggested. Let's just present, side by side, the best evidence for both, and let the students decide in an environment of free thinking, rather than telling them what they have to think.

Well, what I find interesting is that the advocates of evolution are so afraid of letting that happen. In fact, the assumption is that if that did happen, it would set us back 50 years. Why? Because the assumption is the creationist view would win.

How else could they claim it would set us back? If we're arguing, let's put the best evidence for evolution here, the best evidence for creation here, and they say, no, that would set us back 50 years. What it means is they're afraid people would become convinced creationists. And that would set us back 50 years, they believe.

I find that an interesting admission. Remember what I said earlier, I personally am of the conviction, it guides my whole life, that the truth always has the best argument. If you get the best argument for this view, and the best argument for this view, and everyone's quite sure everyone will choose this view, it says something about which view has the best argument.

And, of course, it's not been tried in the public school system, but it has been tried in different settings, like debates between knowledgeable evolutionists and knowledgeable creationists. And they're right. The outcome is exactly what they predict.

The crowds go away largely convinced creationists, unless they are, you know, convinced atheists. Anyway, what I'm saying is there is a general mood in our society that the Bible is terribly at odds with what we now know to be scientifically true. Evolution is just a showcase issue where, you know, there's a conflict between what scientists are saying and what the Bible says.

And most people assume that if we would go back to believing the Bible, that this would set scientific progress way backward. I mean, what a terrible thing to do to our educational establishment to bring back belief in that pre-scientific superstitious stuff in

the Bible. So people seem to think.

However, there are several parts to a Christian's response to this attitude. First of all, there can be no conflict between the Bible and science. There can be conflict between the Bible and the opinions of scientists.

But the opinions of scientists is not the same thing as science. Scientists have not always agreed among themselves. They do not currently all agree among themselves.

And even when there has been largely consensus of scientists, often later discoveries have shown that their consensus was mistaken. If we say the Bible is in conflict with science, what we mean is science is a metaphysical category of things that are discovered to be true by experiment. That's what science is.

Truth discovered by the experimental process. That's science. The Bible has never been found to be in conflict with science in that respect.

That would require that some experimental observation has yielded some knowledge of some truth and that truth contradicts the Bible. It never has happened. Never once.

What has happened many times and happens every day in our society is that the Bible does contradict the opinions of some scientists. Now, if those scientists get more publicity for their opinions than the average, or if their views rule in the academic establishment, then one might get the impression that these opinions are indeed science. But science itself as a field should guard against uncritical thinking.

In fact, it's the very nature of science to be a critical thinker. Not to accept things too quickly. Not to take things for granted.

To make sure all the evidence is in before the conclusion is reached. That's what science is all about. And anyone who would say, because this sector of scientists have for the last 150 years, have basically agreed that evolution is true.

And the Bible disagrees with that. Therefore, science is against the Bible. It's being far too premature.

First of all, I mean, talking about evolution again, which is not the only issue of concern, but it's a showcase issue in the controversy between science and the Bible. First of all, evolution is facing very hard times right now as a theory. It is not merely religious fundamentalists who are attacking it.

It is being attacked from within. It's on camp. There are conflicting theories that are mutually exclusive within the scientific community about evolution, even among those who believe in evolution.

There are those like Richard Dawkins, possibly the leading zoologist in England, who

believes in the old gradualistic theories of evolution that Darwin taught. And then there are men like Stephen Jay Gould, who is probably the leading evolutionary voice in America, who believes in an entirely different scenario. He doesn't believe in gradualism.

He believes in something called punctuated equilibrium, where evolution happens after long periods of no change, just suddenly. A rapid change happens relatively suddenly in terms of geologic time. And it's basically contradictory to gradualism.

The guys like Gould, who believe in punctuated equilibrium, are continually writing papers and doing research showing that the gradualism of the other camp is wrong, that there can't have been gradualism. There's all kinds of evidence against it. And Gould and his type, though he's an atheist and an evolutionist, he's continually writing work that proves gradualistic evolution of the Darwinian type is wrong and can't be true.

Well, the gradualists like Dawkins, they come back with their artillery and they write papers and books proving that Gould is wrong and that punctuated equilibrium can't be right. And they're shooting themselves in the foot because they're both successful. They can both prove that the other camp is wrong.

Because both are wrong. And for some to say, well, the science has proven evolution. Really? Which version of evolution has it proven? Who proved it? And where is the consensus among the scientists that believe this claim, that science has proven evolution? You can't find it.

People who say it are simply out of touch with what's going on in the academic world in this respect. Furthermore, what many people are refusing to acknowledge is that there are thousands in this country, literally thousands, of professional scientists whose academic degrees are impeccable, who have every bit as much credentials as their atheist counterparts. There are thousands of professional scientists in this country and professors of science who believe in creationism.

Now, that doesn't make creationism right. But what it says is, if we talk about evolution, we're talking about the opinion of some scientists. There are some scientists, a great number, who don't believe evolution occurs.

And among those who do, they're shooting each other in their research papers showing that they're both wrong. Now, anyone who would say, the evidence is now all in, all discussion is silenced, and we all know now that evolution occurred and science has proven it, simply is not talking about science in the purest sense of that word. Science has not in any sense proven evolution.

Many are arguing, even many evolutionists are arguing, it can't prove it. And they think they don't need to. They just figure it's the only conclusion we can reach since there can't be creation.

I mean, that's honestly what many of them are actually saying. They're saying, we can't prove evolution to be true, but we don't need to, because evolution must have occurred. It's the only conclusion that can be reached, unless you want to go with creation.

But you can't do that, because then you need God, and there's no God. Does that sound like a scientist talking? Or an ideologue? Let me read you some quotes here. I don't have them in your notes, but... These are some quotes from, essentially, evolutionary sources.

Sir Julian Huxley, who was the leading evolutionist of his day, died about 30 years ago. Back in 1960, he made this statement. He said, the first point to make about Darwin's theory is that it is no longer a theory, but a fact.

No serious scientist would deny that evolution has occurred, just as he would not deny the fact that the Earth goes around the Sun. End quote. Now, he may have thought that was true in his day.

Actually, it wasn't. He was just ignorant of the fact that there were many serious scientists in his day who didn't believe evolution occurred. But he just didn't regard them as serious enough, because they didn't agree with him.

But he believed in the gradualism of Darwin. Modern evolutionists largely challenge that and don't believe it's true. But you can see that the dogmatism was there, and it was definitely premature.

Richard B. Goldschmidt, another scientist back in the early 50s, he's dead now too, made similar statements. He said, quote, evolution of the plant and animal world is considered by all those entitled to judgment to be a fact for which no further proof is needed. End quote.

So, notice how they argue. Did he present evidence that evolution is true? Did he prove it? No. All he has to say is, it is considered by all whose opinion is worth considering to be true.

The way he said it is, it is considered by all those entitled to judgment to be a fact for which no further proof is needed. That's, you know, maybe he thought that was true, but that, of course, requires him to define who's entitled to make a judgment call on it. Certainly, if having academic credentials equal to his own and having spent the same amount of time in research as he had spent qualifies someone as being entitled to judgment, he was wrong in terms of his statement, because there were many persons of equal rank to him in the scientific community, but more stifled because they didn't believe in evolution, which was a prevailing orthodoxy, as it is even still today.

A modern writer, Richard Dawkins, as I mentioned earlier, America's, I mean, England's foremost zoologist has written some best-selling books, best-selling among the scientific, you know, nerd-type people. Or, I mean, you don't have to be a nerd if you're just

interested in science, but, I mean, he's sort of like Gould over here. Stephen Jay Gould over here is a guru of the science, you know, students.

Richard Dawkins is sort of like that in England. In his book, *The Blind Watchmaker*, Richard Dawkins said, quote, it is absolutely safe to say that if you meet somebody who claims not to believe in evolution, that person is ignorant, stupid, or insane, he says in parentheses, or wicked, but I'd rather not consider that, unquote. Interestingly, in the very next paragraph, he goes on to say what he liked least about fundamentalists is that they're intolerant.

This is the way scientists sometimes talk. However, not all of them do. Some evolutions actually say otherwise.

Dean Kenyon, who, I don't know if he got fired or not, but there was an attempt to fire him from San Francisco State University faculty because he's professor of biology at San Francisco State University. He is not a Christian or a creationist, but he made this statement printed in the *Oregonian* February 7th in 87. He was almost fired.

I don't know if they finally fired him or not because he was he was not a creationist, but he said honest things about evolution, and that's not allowed in the university. He said, quote, it is my professional opinion that creation science is as scientific as evolution and that creation science is as non-religious as evolution. End quote.

He didn't say it was his opinion that creation science is true. He just said looking at it objectively, I think it's as scientific as the other theory. You can test both theories with about the same amount of scientific you know, approach.

Anyway, I got a lot of quotes here. These notes I'm glancing over are from my four tape series on evolution and creation. But most people assume, of course, that evolution has been proven true.

But I have an interesting quote from Stephen Jay Gould that he made well, he was actually quoted by another evolutionist, Jeremy Chirpus, in *New Scientist* magazine. Volume 102, May 17th, 1984, page 29. Chirpus quotes Stephen Jay Gould as having said, quote, if there were no imperfections in nature, like, you know, the pandas though, if there were none of those, he says, there would be no evidence to favor evolution by natural selection over creation.

Unquote. But did you hear what he just said? He's the leading evolutionist in America today. Harvard professor of biology, atheist.

And he says this. Notice what he says. If there were no imperfections in nature, of the type that he's referring to in terms of the pandas though, that's to his mind an imperfection.

If there were no imperfections, he says, there would be no evidence to favor evolution over special creation. Whoa. What a statement that is.

With that one statement, he sweeps away all the historic arguments for evolution and says, they don't exist. They're not valid. And he's right.

They're not. Anyone can look at them carefully and see they're not. You know, the way that evolutionists win the debate is not by presenting better evidence.

It's by saying, like Richard Dawkins did, if you meet anyone who doesn't believe in evolution, he's either stupid, maybe wicked, you know, maybe insane even. That's what he says. Now you say those things often enough, and no one wants to say I'm a creationist publicly anymore.

But the fact is that evolutionists, evolution is just a theory whose time came and went. It is now struggling terribly. There's an agnostic scientist and medical doctor, he's a microbiologist and medical doctor in Australia.

His name is Dr. Michael Denton. He's written a couple of books. I've only read his first, if it was his first, it's the first I've heard of, called Evolution, A Theory in Crisis.

This man is not a creationist, he doesn't believe in God. He's just a scientist of very impeccable rank. And he wrote a book, yay thick, I have it, 300 something pages, tearing evolution apart.

Not from the Bible, but from the scientific evidence. He's showing why evolution is indeed a theory in crisis. Now, the evolutionists are fighting each other over their disagreements privately behind closed doors.

They don't want the creationists to listen. One magazine article that was reporting this said it reminds them of parents arguing in whispers behind their bedroom door hoping the children won't hear them, you know, arguing. Because they don't want the creationists to be encouraged by this crisis in the evolutionary camp.

And they all will affirm that evolution is true, although they can't agree as to what form of evolution took place because there's no evidence for it. There's no proof of it. Anyway, I digress.

But the thing is, there can be, and there is no conflict between science and the Bible. There is a conflict between the Bible and the opinions of some scientists on this issue and many other issues. But there has never yet been something proven by science to be true through the experimental method that turned out to be contrary to the Bible.

At least the Bible has never been unless correctly understood. And by correctly understood I don't mean that we interpret it for our convenience to get out from under a

tight squeeze that science puts us in so we can come up with innovative arguments to reinterpret the Bible. Some Christians have done that, by the way.

Some Christians thinking that evolution is indeed a fact. I mean, they've been bamboozled. They've been intimidated by scientific bombardment of it's a fact for which no further proof is needed.

So they say, okay, okay, we will stop fighting that battle. We'll agree that evolution occurred over millions of years. But now we need to find a way to find that in the Bible.

So they go to what's called the gap theory. And they try to find some gap of millions of years between Genesis 1-1 and Genesis 1-2 to accommodate evolution. Or they go to an alternative where they say, well the days of creation in Genesis 1 they could be long ages.

They could be millions of years long each. Who's to say they were 24 hour days? And these are ways in which assuming that evolution is true and has been proven Christians have sometimes weaseled their way into accommodating it into new and innovative interpretations of Bible passages trying to find some way to accommodate it. Now, that may satisfy some people but it's not likely to satisfy very many evolutionists.

I mean, most people look on that for what it is and say, I think you're kind of weaseling here. I think we've got you under the gun and you're grasping it strong. But when I say the Bible correctly understood I mean that the the best approach to Scripture is to use whatever recognize whatever literary devices were used whether they're figures of speech or parables or whatever and poetry and to interpret those passages along the proper methods and principles and interpretations of that kind of literature and discover what is being affirmed there and say, has science ever disproven any of those things? And the fact of the matter is I would say the answer is no.

And I would expect it to always be no for the simple reason that God who is the author of Scripture if it's claimed to be correct now, I could be accused of begging the question because I'm starting with that assumption but let's just sort of think of arguments from the Christian point of view God gave us the Scripture He also gave us the planet and the universe. He's the author of both. Science is simply the process of discovery of what's real in the world in the universe.

Once discovered the reality of the world and the universe cannot be different than what God said it was in His Word because He's the author of both. You know, the Bible and the world come from the same hand and therefore they cannot really be contrasted with each other or conflicted with each other. The God who inspired the Scriptures also created the universe.

Scientists, insofar as they discover realities of the universe will be discovering what God

has always known and often what He has long ago revealed in the Bible. A little later in this lecture we'll actually see examples where the Bible said certain things were true about the universe and at the time it was written science such as it existed denied those things. The Bible was actually speaking against the grain of the perceived scientific notions of its day.

But modern science has confirmed what the Bible said and disproved what the science of its own day said. So, that doesn't prove it's inspiring but it certainly is it is a trend you find in Scripture that the Scripture contradicts the common sense of its own day of its own culture of the opinions and the conventional wisdom of its own time and later discoveries in our modern times prove the Bible is right and that the viewpoints it contradicted were wrong. Now, it should be considered if anyone thinks well, science is best followed without any belief in the Bible you know, if you believe in the supernatural if you believe in the Bible that's just going to make you incapable of doing good science it's going to set you back.

It should be considered this that men of science of the highest rank from the beginning of science until the present have often been men of faith in the Bible as well. Now, that doesn't prove that the Bible is true of course, just because some scientist accepts the Bible doesn't prove it's true but it certainly raises questions as to whether belief in the Bible prevents people from being good scientists or doing good science. It certainly did not inhibit their spectacular advances in their field so, a list of such men would include but not be limited to Copernicus Galileo Pascal I mean, Pascal is considered by everyone to be practically the greatest mathematician and chemist I think in France's history.

He wrote many books of apologetics defending the Bible but he was also one of the greatest scientists that France ever knew. Johannes Kepler Sir Isaac Newton who many people still believe is the greatest scientist who ever lived. He wrote commentaries on the Bible as well as making scientific discoveries.

James Clerk Maxwell I'm sorry, I jumped here Michael Faraday who discovered the means of generating electricity James Clerk Maxwell Ambrose Fleming inventor of the radio not a stupid man's accomplishment Lord Kelvin who is the founder of the laws of thermodynamics not of the laws but the discovery of them and the formulation of them and another would be Wernher von Braun who is the space scientist who escaped from Nazi Germany evangelical Christian believed every word in the Bible is true and he happens to be the one guy who is credited by all to be the man most responsible for putting the first man on the moon. Usually when people talk about the great scientific achievements or the great things that science has done the thing that most people point to is we put a man on the moon you know we don't live in the stone age we're scientific we put a man on the moon well who did it? well a lot of people did it working together but the man whose intelligence is most often credited for it by everybody is Wernher von Braun who happened to be an evangelical Christian believed every word in the Bible is

true didn't keep him from making spectacular advances in his field and this is only a short list of extremely long lists one could make today many of the best scientists in the world are still believers now to say that many great scientists believe the Bible again I want to make it clear what I'm not claiming I'm not claiming that that proves the Bible is inspired I'm not even claiming that that proves that the Bible is true but it certainly challenges any claims that believing the Bible is going to inhibit our ability to discover things scientifically I mean men who have made some of the greatest discoveries ever did so at the same time they believed in the Bible historically in fact those societies that have been most affected by believing the Bible have led the way not lagged behind in scientific and technological advance think about it what part of the world was early on affected by Christianity and that part of the world has been shot through with a biblical worldview even through centuries where people largely rejected the gospel the biblical worldview prevailed where was that? obviously Europe not Asia not Africa Europe where did all scientific progress occur? it happened in Europe now what's interesting about that is that is that scientific progress was not inhibited was not slowed down was not set back by the fact that the European culture accepted as true the biblical record in Asia where people were largely Hindus and didn't know the Bible didn't have a biblical worldview can anyone think of any scientific advances that came from there? can anyone think of any that came from Africa? now this is not a racist statement it so happens I'm white and I came from a European ancestry I'm not talking about racial supremacy I'm talking about something that has nothing to do with race I believe that if the gospel had gone to Asia or Africa instead of Europe we would have seen history differently I think that all these discoveries would have come out of Asia or out of Africa it has nothing to do with the racism of people it has to do with what they believe it so happens that Europe as a continent for the most part embraces a biblical worldview now why would that enhance scientific progress? well, simply this there are two essential worldviews and everything else is a variation or one of the two there's what we might call the Judeo-Christian worldview that's what we can find in the bible and then there's what we could call the Eastern worldview largely typified by Hinduism and Buddhism in the Eastern worldview there are many things that would not encourage scientific discovery or even exploration for example Hinduism teaches that everything is as put in the Hindu language Maya M-A-Y-A Maya all is Maya you know what that means? illusion there's nothing real everything is illusory all things are just an illusion reality is just whatever you want it to be whatever you perceive it to be everyone creates their own reality by their beliefs now if you believe that as people in the East typically have I mean that's the worldview over there would that encourage you to start searching for patterns in the world and laws of nature of course that's all an illusion anyway what's true to you it's not true to someone else what's the point? it doesn't encourage scientific investigation but the Judeo-Christian worldview has always believed that the creation exists as a result of an intelligent purposeful creator who designed things in a certain orderly way and that there is an observable orderliness of it and that the more we study it the more we can discover the patterns and the laws that that describe this orderliness and that's what science is really

the attempt to discover natural laws and people who have a biblical worldview have historically led the way again I'm not claiming that proves the Bible is true but it certainly makes a fool out of anyone who says that belief in the Bible inhibits scientific progress it does not it never has and there's no reason to believe it ever will we should remember that the Bible has never yet been proven wrong by any scientific evidence however scientific theories throughout history have often been proven wrong by scientific evidence that emerged later on a notable case was given to you in your notes here on page 2 in 1861 the French Academy of Science published a book containing 51 scientifically proven facts that contradicted the Bible now that was 130 years ago 140 years ago almost 140 years ago if you were a Christian in France and this book appeared from the French Academy of Science then this book shows 51 scientifically proven facts that contradict the Bible it'd be rather difficult to hold your faith wouldn't it? I mean science has proven the Bible false in 51 different scientific ways well don't give up too soon modern science has progressed far more today not one not even one of those 51 scientifically proven facts are held to be true by modern scientists today they were adamantly and dogmatically and confidently asserted by science the best of science in its day 140 years ago to be true all of them every one of them has been disproven to be great so if somebody says well, you know science has disproven the ideas of creation I say well I don't believe it has and even if it's true that the majority of scientists would say that it has I'm willing to wait new evidence may turn up actually in this case we don't have to wait for new evidence all the evidence adequate evidence is in to reject evolution we don't have to wait for more we just have to wait for scientists to become more honest and admit it that may be a long wait now critics of the bible sometimes say that science and the bible are in conflict because of the bible having a pre-scientific world view that the cosmos as portrayed in the bible is woefully superstitious and uninformed and and that in those days they just didn't know what we know about the nature of the universe I've actually excerpted from two different books by skeptics paragraphs that exemplify this mentality and you hear it all the time I just pulled these out of two books that I read I've read many books that say essentially the same thing they're wrong no matter how often they say it but they they still keep saying it this one comes from the five gospels a product of a group of pseudo scholars called the Jesus Seminar some of them are real scholars others are pseudo scholars but they're really wrong headed and they do not conduct their business in a scientific manner whatever they claim to but they put out a book called the five gospels basically in the gospels can't be trusted about 20% of the things that Jesus said they conclude maybe he really did say the other 80% he certainly didn't if you want to consider their evidence you will not be impressed but in the introduction of that book I believe the guy's name is Robert Plunk who wrote the introduction but he said quote the contemporary religious controversy epitomized in the scopes trial and continuing and the continuing clamor for creationism as a viable alternative to the theory of evolution turns on whether the world view reflected in the bible can be carried forward into this scientific age and retained as an article of faith he goes on the Christ of creed and dogma he means doctrine there

religion the Christ believed by the religious community who had been firmly in place in the middle ages can no longer command the assent of those who have seen the heaven through Galileo's telescope the old deities and demons were swept from the skies by that remarkable glass Copernicus, Kepler, and Galileo have dismantled the mythical abodes of the gods and satans and bequeathed us a secular heaven it might surprise you that the person who wrote that is called a leading New Testament scholar if you're not from their liberalism you might be amazed that people who would devote their lives to teaching New Testament studies and would believe something like this there's no god there's no devil there's no supernatural and there's no and we know that now of course and we need to ask ourselves whether this ancient worldview of the Bible can really be carried forward into this modern scientific age and retained as an article of faith he says what I find ironic is the man's poor knowledge of the topic of which he's seeking he says that the Christ of Christianity cannot be believed anymore by those who've seen the universe through Galileo's telescope I dare say Galileo looked through his own telescope and he believed in Christ of the Creed this man gives examples of the people who he says dismantled the mythical abodes of the gods and Satan and bequeathed us a secular heaven who are they? Copernicus, Kepler, and Galileo interestingly enough all those were Bible-believing Christians some of them Catholics I mean you might not think Catholics are Christians but I mean some of them lived before the Reformation but they believed the Bible they believed in the Christ of the Creed and yet this man says that they dismantled the mythical abodes of the gods and gave us a secular heaven I don't think any of them realized they were doing that they didn't if that's what they discovered they sure missed it they didn't recognize that the gods and the demons and the mythical abodes called heaven and hell don't exist and we now have a secular heaven this is far from what they would have said their discoveries proved this is of course a statement of opinion that is not based on any reality at all but that's what you're going to get whenever you get this kind of criticism of the Bible in another book W.M. Forrest wrote he's a professor of something or another and he wrote a book called Do Fundamentalists Play Fair he implies they don't that we somehow are not being quite honest when arguing for a fundamentalist approach to the Bible in that book on pages 13 and 14 he said quote the nature of the biblical universe is clear and simple the earth was made of a flat body whose four corners were supported by pillars going down through the waters that were around it and under it then a canopy or firmament overarched it with waters pent up above it for rain and flood let go of the flood you know the firmament was only a little way up and might have been reached from the top of the tower of Babel if Jehovah had not prevented the completion of that ambitious building unquote now if the Bible really teaches those things that certainly would be a serious objection to believe in the Bible I mean certainly no one today believes the earth is I mean no one really seriously who knows the fact believes the earth is flat sitting on pillars and that there is a dome not very far up that you can reach with a big skyscraper and that dome is a solid dome called the firmament and the waters are above it and there is 10% of that light through that are called the stars I mean I have heard skeptics misrepresent the Bible in these

very words many times I guess this guy has been in a place because when I lived in Santa Cruz we saw an advertisement in the paper that there was going to be a speaker at Cabrillo College sponsored by the Humanist Society or something at the college Humanist Club and he was going to be speaking on the humanist view of the Bible so I went to hear him and hoped for an opportunity for there to be questions and answers and I was not disappointed but I was disappointed with the man's honesty as I have too often been when I've heard these kind of lectures he said this exact thing I mean he could have been quoting maybe he was I don't know I was amazed I had not read this quote at the time I heard the man because it had been 20 years ago now but he said the Bible presents the earth is flat it sits on pillars there is a big dome over it that is the firmament and it is not very far up the stilt house and we all know that's false now end of case Bible is silly and I didn't realize that a lot of people said that I thought I wonder where he got that at that time I had only talked to the Bible 4 or 5 times and I couldn't remember where it said any of those things and frankly I doubt if he had read the Bible through even once he misrepresented it all over the place but the fact is and I've written it down for you so that you don't miss any part of it it should be noted that the Bible affirms none of these things namely a flat earth a low heaven etc the Bible doesn't affirm any of those things it's true the flatness of the earth is never mentioned in the Bible though the roundness of it might be in Isaiah 40 verse 22 where it says that God sits on the circle of the earth and some say that the Hebrew word there should be the sphere of the earth it's not clear exactly whether that statement is saying that the earth is spherical but it might be it sounds like it could be but it's never said to be flat you do find in the Bible the expressions the four corners of the earth and the pillars of the earth which is of course what these guys are referring to but these expressions are always found in highly poetic passages in the Psalms and in some of the highly poetic passages in the Prophets where it's not written in prosaic descriptions of things it's talking about it's talking poetically and by the way you don't have to say that in order to get the Bible out of an embarrassing situation every scholar who doesn't have a clue what he's trying to get the Bible out of would acknowledge these passages in the Psalms are poetry and in Job and so forth poetry is by nature not usually literal it employs a great number of figures of speech and metaphors and so forth the Bible uses phenomenal language now you might use the word phenomenal differently than we're saying here phenomenal language means describing the phenomenon as it appears not as it is to say that the sun came up and the sun traveled across the sky and the sun went down at the end of the day that is not speaking literally the sun doesn't actually move in that sense it's not moving around the earth the earth is in fact turning we only perceive the sun as if it's coming up and going across the sky and so forth and the Bible talks that way the sun came up the sun went down the sun went across the sky the Bible uses phenomenal language there you go proves they didn't know what we know about the universe the solar system I say well it seems to me that we now know certain things about the solar system but we still talk about the sun coming up and the sun going down and the sun moving across the sky we talk that way too does it mean that we are scientifically

inaccurate does it mean we are conflicting with science no it means we are using a figure of speech we use phenomenal language all the time we allow ourselves to why don't we allow others to why do we pick on the Bible writers just because they use the same literary devices that every other writer or speaker uses it's just a flaw when they do it it's not when we do it when they do it it proves that they are in conflict with science when we do it it doesn't prove any such thing what's the deal there is a double standard in the standard that we are being used to the fact is the Bible is a very complex book full of a great number of genres of literature poetry prophecy parables there is apocalyptic style there is all kinds of styles there is also narrative style there are figures of speech the full range the full range of figures of speech that we use are all found in the Bible too but the problem is if we use figures of speech we can be forgiven if the biblical writer uses them somehow this becomes a flaw showing that they can't really know the truth and therefore they can't be inspired I have in your notes an example of a modern poem by a modern author a modern poet Shelley he had a poem called The Cloud one of the stanzas in that poem said this and this is the cloud speaking the cloud says I bind the sun's throne with a burning zone and the moon with a girdle of pearl the volcanoes are dim and the stars reel and swim when whirlwinds my banner unfurl and the moon now are we going to write off Shelley as someone who needs to go back to school and study meteorology or something I mean doesn't he realize that clouds aren't made of pearl they don't bind the moon with a girdle of pearl the moon doesn't wear a girdle and it's not pearl anyway furthermore I think he needs to go back to school and learn something about the universe he doesn't seem to realize that the stars don't reel and swim well obviously he realizes those things and no one faults him for writing what he writes why he's a poet he's writing poetry flamboyant imagery is a typical feature of poetry and for that reason we need to learn to recognize when the Bible is poetry there's whole books in the Bible that are poetry Psalms Proverbs Ecclesiastes Job these whole books are poetry and then when you come to the prophetic books all of them are principally poetic in style they write poetically it was in just a characteristic of the prophets they preferred to write in poetry let me show you what I mean by this if you turn in your Bible unless you have the King James so this won't appear in the King James for the simple reason that the King James translators did not present material in paragraphs each verse in the King James was treated as if it was a separate paragraph it's just the way they laid it out on the page but every modern translation has made a distinction between poetry and prose look at Ezekiel 35 for example I just opened it at random you could open it almost anywhere in the prophets at random excuse me I just let the Bible follow me here's an example you can find it everywhere Ezekiel is a prophet Ezekiel 35 provides a reasonable example of what I'm talking about notice that verses 3 and 4 are set in a different kind of type structure than the rest of the chapter notice verses 5 through 9 are presented like a normal paragraph there's no indentions or anything in special places it's just like a regular paragraph the reason is verses 5 through 9 are recognizably written in prose verses 3 and 4 however are presented differently if you have the King James it won't appear so but if you have any other translation I'm not critical of the King James I

like it it's just that you won't be able to see what I'm saying there if you look there but with anything else you'll see an indentation the same kind of indentions you find in poetry you know why? because the translators know poetry when they see it in Hebrew and they present it as such if you would look at take any take your choice any passage in the Psalms you'll see that there's not a single paragraph there it's all indented in it like poetry because Psalms the whole book is poetry but look at Isaiah it might surprise you with the exception of very few chapters and very few paragraphs in Isaiah it's all in poetry and it's very true likewise Jeremiah or go to Micah or Amos you'll find the same truth the poets wrote in prophecy the prophets wrote in poetry let's get that right the poets wrote in prophecy the prophets wrote in poetry a huge huge percentage of the writings of the Old Testament are written in Hebrew poetry and Hebrew poetry like any other has its own canon of description it has its own ways of getting a point across if Shelley says that the cloud binds the moon with a girdle of pearl we're not going to accuse him of misleading us because he is not really affirming he's not saying now this is a precise scientific description of how the moon is girdled with a girdle of pearl he's he's saying it for effect without without seeking to affirm anything about the real nature of the solar system and there if poets can do this in modern time we don't criticize them on what basis could we criticize ancient poets for doing exactly the same thing they do that all the time you know Isaiah talks about the tree in the field that claps their hands trees don't even have hands much less do they clap them God told Moses that the land of Canaan was a land flowing with milk and honey well when they came into Canaan they didn't find that the rivers instead of water had milk and honey in them it's a figure of speech why cannot biblical writers use figures of speech like we do why is it only an error on their part when they do it this is simply applying a double standard anyone who is interested to know the truth about the matter will recognize that different genres of literature different methods of expression are employed in the Bible just as it's true in all literature and when the genre is identified you will never find it so that in some straightforward narrative that something is affirmatively true that is in fact scientifically inaccurate but you'll find many things in the poets that are you know way out poetic stuff like the fencing that's what poets do to call that a problem in the Bible is to simply be bigoted against the Bible in a way that we're not bigoted against other poetry now another thing critics often claim that the Bible in recording miracles is reflecting a pre-scientific mythology that is no longer credible in light of modern scientific knowledge I don't know if you've heard of the the expression the God of the gaps the expression is used largely by unbelievers to refer to the way people think and the way people try to explain things they don't understand there are great gaps in our knowledge and of course there are smaller gaps and fewer of them now than there used to be in ancient times but people in ancient times didn't know what made a volcano erupt they knew what made an arrow fly through there because they could see a bow they didn't have any problem explaining why an arrow flew through there but they didn't know why a volcano erupted that represented a gap in their knowledge and it was something unexplainable to them so it is argued that ancient people being relatively superstitious

and not very scientific they typically just invoked a god to explain these things they didn't understand the gaps in what they knew they knew this and they knew this but they didn't know anything they didn't know this this gap this deficiency in their knowledge they filled the gap with a theory about a god that's what the expression god of the gaps means and many people have felt like the bible is a good place to find this phenomenon of the god of the gaps people didn't understand scientific laws in those days therefore they gave supernatural explanations to things and because they were willing to give supernatural explanations to things they were somewhat gullible about accepting as truth supernatural stories about miracles and things like that now they say modern scientific progress has been very successful and incredible in this past century I mean scientific knowledge today exceeds probably by a factor of I'm estimating probably ten thousand the scientific knowledge of anyone in the 1800s I mean scientific knowledge is rapidly increasing incrementally every few years and therefore they say well we don't have as many gaps we don't need god as much I mean there's fewer things that we don't understand we can explain them scientifically we don't need to invoke a theory that there's a god or something involved with it we no longer have to think that a god made the volcano go up we don't have to assume that the earth opened up and that was a judgment of god on Korah that was just an earthquake we can explain how the tectonic plates move and bump up against each other and the inversion layer there you know it just causes an upheaval and a fault line I mean people can explain more things scientifically now than they could back in the difficult times and the assumption is that the more we can explain that way the less there is room for god in our thinking and once we get to the point where we've explained so many of these things even if there's a few things we still don't know how to explain them yet the trend is toward finding authentic explanations that don't require god therefore what few things we can't explain yet we can pretty well you know it's reasonable to assume that we'll find those too we'll eventually be able to explain those as well and the trend is so far advanced in this direction that we really we're not it would be wise to stop even thinking about god at all and realize that eventually science will explain everything for us what things used to be thought of as miracles or acts of god you know that's outdated thinking that might have worked during the time when people didn't know what we know today but we know so much there's just no it's silly it's superstitious to talk about demon possession when now we know there's these complex genetic mental illnesses and we can control those medications it's clearly they say not supernatural and yet they thought it was supernatural well this is the way to talk but this isn't true first of all the assumption that the biblical writers were wrong when they recorded miracles comes not from anything that can be scientifically proven against them but it comes from prejudice and bigotry on the part of the critics the objection of critics rests upon their commitment to philosophical naturalism and that's in other words naturalism is the opposite of supernaturalism if a person is a naturalist they don't believe in the supernatural they believe that everything can be explained by nature and by laws of nature and so forth that's what scientists usually if they're not Christians they assume that that's also known

as metaphysical materialism that the material world is all there is there's not a spiritual supernatural realm so naturalism and materialism in that sense of the word is the commitment that most of these critics of the Bible have they say we now know there's no such thing as a supernatural well how do we know this? well it's not popular in some scientific circles to believe in it but that's not the same thing as knowing something or proving something in order to prove that miracles cannot occur one would have to first prove that there exists no God capable of doing miracles because as long as there might be a God who can do miracles then he might have done some we just don't know and that's if a person could prove that there was no such God in the same act they would have gone a long way to prove that there's no miracles either that miracles can't happen but when has anyone been able to think of an experiment that could prove there's no God? by definition God is not part of the natural realm and that's the only realm that science knows how to look at how would they know if there's a God or not? how would they discover him through scientific methods? what laboratory experiment could be done? what would you use? litmus paper? a Geiger counter? how are you going to discover if there's a God or not by scientific means? if God exists at all he doesn't exist in that realm that science observes that he exists in the supernatural realm now someone might deny that such a realm exists if they prefer but to prove that it doesn't exist is simply out of out of the realm of science at all and until they can prove that no such God exists they cannot prove that he's never done a miracle by the way the Bible does not anywhere claim that miracles happen all the time or that every day you have a few miracles happen and I mean it's not like they lived in some superstitious notion that life was just full of miraculous activities the sun stood still every few days or something you know I mean one time they didn't claim that virgins got pregnant on a regular basis the claims of scripture is that there are unique and unusual cases where God did exceptional things where he intervened and did what is not what normally happens that's the claim of scripture the claim of scripture is not that the miraculous explainable is the normal course of life every time a miracle was recorded in scripture the people were astonished by it because they weren't used to seeing miracles the Bible doesn't give the impression that the miraculous is the normal thing but it's abnormal and the very fact that people were astonished by it means that they were not ignorant of what was normal how could you recognize an abnormality unless you had some idea of what's normal unless they knew something about the laws of nature already how could they recognize that the laws of nature had not been followed in this case when Joseph found out that Mary was pregnant what did he do he concluded that she had had sex with a man started to make plans to divorce her didn't carry them out because God stopped him but the fact of the matter is there's a reason why he did that it's not because in those days people didn't really know where babies came from so they just thought well maybe God makes women pregnant that must be what it is you know they didn't believe that then he didn't believe that then he had to be convinced but he wasn't convinced by some kind of superstitious pre-scientific ignorance he was convinced by an appearance of an angel that told him this is an unusual case it's true women don't get pregnant without sex generally in fact

we don't know of any case that's happened except once but the fact that it could happen one time can never be ruled out if that somehow fits the pattern of what God may want to do and if that God exists who can do such a thing who can say with any reasonable ground that this could not have occurred just because I've never seen it occur well there's all kinds of things I've never seen occur that occur that are even called supernatural you can sometimes get well you can get Ripley's Believe It or Not you know read some of those stories you know many very unusual things happen sometimes we can call them unique events you may never ever see them happen but there's not any necessary reason to believe they didn't occur life is full of unique events it's also full of regular predictable events but there's both the question of whether a unique event was a miracle or not of course depends on whether it violated some known scientific law it is not the province of science however to know whether such miracles could occur a miracle by definition is the violation or the momentary setting apart of a natural process or a natural law the province of science is limited to the observation and explanation of the normal operation of natural law such as science does if you know anything about science and I assume you must having come up you know through the ordinary school system you must know that science is a category of knowledge not every not all knowledge comes from science there are other ways history is a different issue science and history are two different ways of knowing different things science refers to knowledge of a certain category of things things that can be observed repeatedly and can be experimented on with consistency right? I mean that's what science refers to the scientific method means you observe it you observe the same thing again and again and again you begin to formulate a hypothesis you make a hypothesis that there must be something here that there's something predictable going on here there's some force in nature that makes it happen this way regularly you begin to experiment on it all your experiments yield the same results time and time again eventually your hypothesis is elevated and ranked to the status of a theory and the theory then has to undergo further tests and if every experiment holds true if there's a consistency throughout the whole process of experimentation from the hypothesis to the theory on up then and only then do you begin to say we've discovered a scientific fact we've discovered a scientific law that's what science is now we can know things but we can't we can't know about other subjects that don't conform to that kind of experimentation for example was I born in San Bernardino California well I was as a matter of fact but I can't prove that by experiment we can't see that we can't prove that happening repeatedly it only happened one time there are unique historic events that really did happen or really are true but to know them would not mean to go into a laboratory and experiment in this manner it means that there are areas of knowledge that we know by means other than scientific experimentation equally valid historic events are known by them happening in the presence of witnesses and being reported by reliable witnesses that's how we know if a historic event happened you can't go back and repeat it anyway the province of science is limited to the observation and explanation of the normal operation of natural laws by definition a miracle represents a departure from those norms a momentary setting aside

or pre-empting of those laws by the intervention of a god who transcends all law that's what a miracle would be the scientist's province is to explain how those laws work when no such intervention interrupts them the likelihood of intervention is not calculable by scientific means the question of whether such intervention has occurred in the past cannot be explored through scientific means but would be a matter of history recorded by witnesses to the occurrence F. Lewis in one of his stories I think it's in the book God and the Dot one of his essays he talks about a conversation he had with a friend of his who was an atheist and his friend the atheist said well you know of course miracles don't occur science he said science has proven that miracles don't occur and C.F. Lewis said oh really I hadn't heard how did it do so how could it do so and the man was surprised that Lewis even challenged the notion that science had proven that miracles don't occur he said well of course science has proven that things don't occur we now have explanations scientific for things we don't need to have miracles and C.F. Lewis said well let me ask you a question he said if I put four cents in my drawer today and I come back tomorrow and put two more cents in the drawer how many cents will be in the drawer and his friend said well there'll be six unless there's been a thief in the drawer in the meantime and C.F. Lewis said well that's precisely my point because the laws of mathematics can tell you how many coins will be in the drawer if there is no intervention from a thief in the meantime but the laws of mathematics are not capable of telling you whether or not a thief will be in the drawer in the meantime you'd better consult a criminologist for that not a mathematician because the laws of mathematics can only tell you how things will be if they are not violated or if there's no intervention to change things and it's the same thing with the miraculous the claim that a miracle occurred is not a claim that science is invalid science tells us how things occur regularly when nothing changes them but science itself as a discipline can't tell you whether or not anything could possibly intervene science can't tell you whether there's a God or not a God science can't tell you whether God at one time made the sun stop or not science can't tell you that they can all science can say as we have measured the progress of the sun for X number of years and we have never seen it happen yet this is the way it happens all the time but we can't know that there never was a time of intervention now that sounds very naive to the modern mind but it's reasonable unless you can prove there is no God you cannot prove that there are no miracles or that there have never been miracles let me read you a quote that came from an early book by Clark Pinnock called The Defense of Biblical Insuperability he says this in my opinion so well quote the pervasive presence of miracle he means in the bible offends the existential and naturalistic mood of our day despite the offense however miracles fit neatly into the world view of biblical theism theism means the belief that there is a God once you believe there is a God miracles fit very well into the world view of biblical theism where they function as part of the total discourse of God that is to say God reveals himself through various ways including his miraculous intervention continue empirical science cannot contest the validity of a miracle for the simple reason that the event cannot be repeated for experiment today the evidence for a miracle as for any historical event is

the testimony of those who witnessed it on that ground the resurrection of Jesus is a very well attested miracle end quote witnessed by many and recorded by many witnesses no one can find a flaw in that reasoning anyone who thinks they can are not very reasonable that is entirely reasonable if you rule out biblical theism of course then you're not going to have any miracles or if you do they won't be the miracles that come from God since there would be no God but if you include the possibility of biblical theism a possibility that could never be ruled out on the grounds of science then miracles might occur and the best way we know is that someone saw them and recorded them the bible purports to record several that people saw and recorded there'd be no reason to reject these unless we decide in advance that miracles can't occur but there's no rational reason to decide that in advance therefore we might question a particular story of miracles I'm not sure that happened but it's not because science proves it didn't happen it's simply because maybe I'm not sure if the witness is telling the truth or not but if I have no reason to doubt the integrity of the witness there's not any serious reason to doubt the fact that a miracle was recorded a few other points here and then we're going to take a break the scriptures have frequently anticipated the findings of scientists centuries in advance of those discoveries and have proved to be more scientifically accurate that is, the bible has proven to be more scientifically accurate than the scientists of a particular period now, this is what I mentioned earlier that the bible actually they've never really found any proven fact that disproves something that the bible affirms but there are many things the bible actually did seem to affirm which were contrary to the scientific theory of the times of the writers so that they were not reflecting their pre-scientific world view as a matter of fact they reflected a view different than the pre-scientific world view of their day and in many cases by almost you know, almost by accident the things they said were later proven to be true by more recent scientific discoveries examples would be well, let's talk about creation again the biblical account of creation fits the known fossil record far better than the pagan theories of evolution do now, when I say pagan theories of evolution I'm not just talking about since Darwin a lot of people mistakenly think that Darwin invented the theory of evolution far from it paganism Hinduism taught evolution for thousands of years paganism has always believed in evolution all Darwin did was put the same theories in a scientific cast he actually adopted pagan ideas and gave us what he thought was a scientific description of the method that it took place which he called natural selection for centuries, pagans, Babylonians believed in evolution but the bible didn't the bible taught something different now, if evolution occurred you'd expect the fossil record to show evidence of fossilized creatures that were transitional from one kind to another because that's what had to happen if evolution occurred if creation occurred you'd expect the fossil record to only show fossils of fully developed creatures that were easily identifiable as being in various classes nothing transitional in between them well, in Darwin's day paleontology, the study of fossil records was a brand new science no one knew much about what they'd find there Darwin admitted that they had not found any transitional forms in his day but he believed they would as the science progressed now, 160 years later literally

millions of fossils have been discovered and the best paleontologists on record tell us that there are no transitional forms at least no indisputable transitional forms that have ever been found yet that's what gives Stephen Jay Gould his ammunition he doesn't believe in gradualism because he says the fossil record doesn't allow it the fossil record actually supports the sudden appearance of various types exactly what you'd expect in a creation scenario but Gould won't be a creationist because he hasn't even gone to that so he comes up with some kind of newfangled evolution that allows sudden appearances but the fossil record supports what the creationists would have predicted it to and what pagan evolution even in Moses' day would not have expected to find Moses wrote Genesis the life that's in the blood is a statement of scripture found in Leviticus 17:11 scientists discovered that this is true 300 years ago Moses said 3,500 years ago because apparently God told him the laws of cleanness and uncleanness in the Bible clean food and unclean food are now known to be in line with the best known hygienic principles today the eating of pork poorly cooked is very dangerous because of microorganisms that Moses could never have known about but God apparently did and he forbade the eating of it you know that in the law of Moses lepers were put outside the camp these were the first known laws in any culture of quarantine of infectious disease although ancient people didn't know anything about infectious disease they didn't know about germs they didn't know about virus they didn't know what caused people to get leprosy probably the pagans just thought it was an attack of the demons but God apparently giving the laws to Moses instituted laws of quarantine the Bible implies that the stars are innumerable and telling Abraham that his children will be innumerable like the stars for centuries scientists laughed at this they didn't believe the stars were innumerable they believed there were several thousands but not innumerable until Galileo it was Galileo's telescope that told us they are innumerable his telescope helped us believe the Bible it didn't help those who ridiculed it also Job said that God hanged the earth on nothing in Job 26-7 in Job's day people thought that the earth was sitting on the back of three elephants standing on a tortoise but Job said God hanged the earth on nothing certainly has a pretty good description of the way modern scientists would say it today furthermore in Luke 17:34 and following Jesus said that on the moment of his return some would be sleeping it would be night time some would be working it would be day time how could it be day and night at the same moment unless the earth was round a flat earth would not have the situation whereas some are it's night time for some and day time for others these don't prove the Bible is inspiring but these are interesting cases where the Bible seems to know so why does the Bible seem to know apparently by inspiration things that scientists would not discover for centuries afterwards now this again is not some kind of a conclusive proof for the Bible but it certainly raises questions about any claims of conflict between science and the Bible and we'll go further looking at another line of evidence next time you